September, 1984 $1.75

ALFRED HITCHCOCK's MYSTERY MAGAZINE



The Night of the Monkey

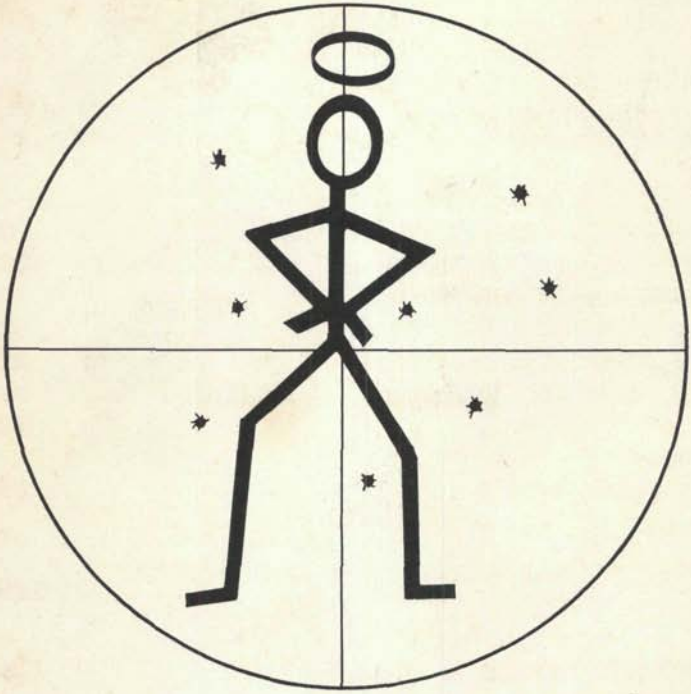
by Ann F. Woodward

AND MORE EXCITING NEW STORIES by Dan A. Sproul, Donald Olson, Lee Russell, and others

09 02646 0 387165

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The SAINT Is Back!
DON'T MISS ANOTHER ISSUE



Take A Shot! . . . at mystery, suspense, intrigue.

◄ Subscribe Now! ►

One year, $18 • Two years, $30 • Three years, $40

Send check or money order to:

The SAINT Magazine

245 Fischer, Unit A-3, Costa Mesa, CA 92626

or

Call Toll Free

1-800-821-6842 and charge it

(in Calif. 1-800-421-1061)

VISA/MASTERCARD ACCEPTED

H84

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CONTENTS



SHORT STORIES

MAJOR PROBLEMS by Dan A. Sproul 8
THE GIRL IN THE ORANGE BERET by Lee Russell 22
CRIMES AND TRIUMPHS by Donald Olson 40
ALONE AT SEA by W. Glenn Duncan 52
THE NIGHT OF THE MONKEY by Ann F. Woodward 62
ALLERGIC TO DEATH by Al and Mary Kuhfeld 84
FIGHT STORY by Brent Haywood 97
THE ADVENTURE OF THE NEW NEIGHBOR by M. C. Sharp 119

MYSTERY CLASSIC

LORD CHIZELRIGG'S MISSING FORTUNE by Robert Barr 129

DEPARTMENTS

EDITOR'S NOTES 4
UNSOLVED by Jerome Meyer 39
THE MYSTERIOUS PHOTOGRAPH 61
THE STORY THAT WON 83
SOLUTION TO THE AUGUST "UNSOLVED" 150
BOOKED & PRINTED by Mary Cannon 151
MURDER BY DIRECTION by Peter Shaw 154

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE Vol. 29, No. 9, September, 1984. Published 13 times a year, every 28 days, by Davis Publications, Inc., at $1.75 per copy January-December issues, $1.95 special mid-December issue. Annual subscription $19.50 in the U.S.A. and possessions; $23.00 elsewhere payable in advance in U.S. funds. Allow 6 to 8 weeks for change of address. Editorial and Executive Offices, 380 Lexington Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10017. Subscription orders and mail regarding subscriptions should be sent to P.O. Box 1932, Marion, O. 43305. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing office. Canadian 3rd class postage paid at Windsor, Ontario.

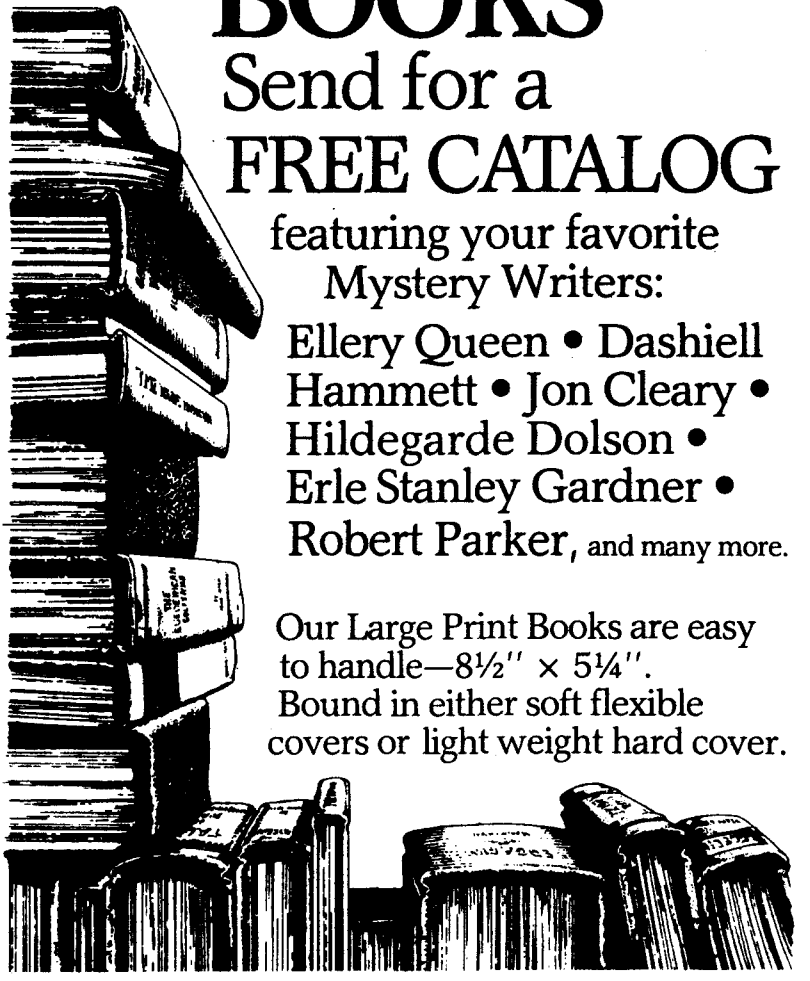
© 1984 by Davis Publications, Inc., all rights reserved. Protection secured under the Universal Copyright Convention. Reproduction or use without express permission of editorial or pictorial content in any manner is prohibited. Printed in U.S.A. All submissions must be accompanied by stamped self-addressed envelope; the Publisher assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts.

POSTMASTER: Send Form 3579 to Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine, P.O. Box 1932, Marion, Ohio 43305. In Canada return to 628 Monmouth Rd., Windsor, Ontario N8Y3L1. **ISSN: 0002-5224.**

Cover by John Raffo

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

LARGE PRINT BOOKS



Send for a FREE CATALOG

featuring your favorite Mystery Writers:

Ellery Queen • Dashiell Hammett • Jon Cleary • Hildegarde Dolson • Erle Stanley Gardner • Robert Parker, and many more.

Our Large Print Books are easy to handle—8½″ × 5¼″. Bound in either soft flexible covers or light weight hard cover.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Why Give Up One Of Life's Greatest Pleasures?

Because it's becoming difficult to read normal type?

Large Print Books make ideal gifts for relatives and friends with visual difficulties. The type size is 18 or 16 point. The same as the type size on this page. Prices are the same or less than your would pay for the Normal Print Edition.

LP BOOKS, INC.
Department-D
P.O. Box 299, Bass River, MA 02664

Yes, send a FREE CATALOG OF LARGE PRINT BOOKS TO:

Mr.
Mrs. _____
Ms.

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

EDITOR'S NOTES

by Cathleen Jordan

Bouchercon XV, the annual convention of mystery writers and readers, is coming up once more. For those of you who would like to attend, the following information might be helpful. The convention will be held from October 26th through the 28th in Chicago, at the Americana-Congress Hotel; this year's guest of honor will be Bill Pronzini. There will, we're sure, be all sorts of panel discussions and talks on the mystery genre, as well as other activities of interest to mystery fans. The admission fee (which includes all three days) is $25; checks should be made payable to Bouchercon XV and sent to Bouchercon XV, Box 576, Hinsdale, Illinois 60521.

One feature of the convention is the presentation of the annual Shamus awards by the Private Eye Writers of America. Awards will be presented for Best Hardcover Novel, Best Paperback Novel, and Best Short Story of 1983 (all involving private eyes, of course). Of particular interest to AHMM's readers is probably the third of those, and the nominees are:

Loren D. Estleman, "Greektown" (AHMM, August)
T. Robin Kantner, "The Long Slow Dive" (AHMM, February)
John Lutz, "Only One Way To Land" (AHMM, October)
Michael Collins, "The Oldest Killer" (The Thieftaker Journals, November)
Bill Pronzini, "Catspaw" (Waves Press)

And speaking of awards, the 38th annual Edgar Allan Poe awards dinner was held in New York in May, at which Edgars were handed out for ten kinds of mysteries, as follows:

BEST NOVEL OF 1983: *La Brava* by Elmore Leonard (Arbor House)

BEST FIRST NOVEL OF 1983: *The Bay Psalm Book Murder* by Will Harriss (Walker)

BEST PAPERBACK ORIGINAL OF 1983: *Mrs. White* by Margaret Tracy (Dell)

BEST SHORT STORY OF 1983: "The New Girlfriend" by Ruth Rendell (EQMM, August)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New From TSR

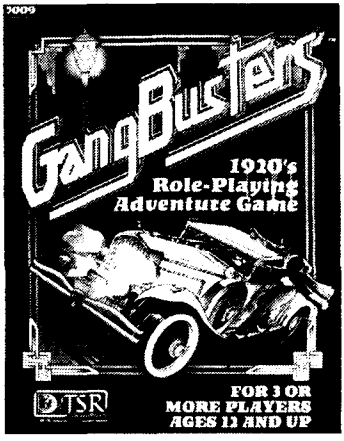
EXTRA EXTRA

Brotherly Love Bulletin

★★★★★ METRO FINAL

©1982 TSR Hobbies, Inc. June 20, 1982 Latest Edition From TSR

Organized Crime Stirs Public Rage



Solution Discovered... GANGBUSTERS™ Game Plays Major Role.

Lakefront City, USA

Citizens are finding GANGBUSTERS™ game to be their best means to create strategies to crush crime in the streets.

It appears that TSR Hobbies has created another outstanding role-playing game...one that may very well equal the success of their world-famous DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game.

For FREE catalog of games and accessories write to:

TSR Hobbies, Inc.
POB 756
Dept. 170-123
Lake Geneva, WI
53147

In the UK:
TSR Hobbies, (UK) Ltd.
The Mill Rathmore Rd.
Cambridge, England
CB1 4AD

Read all about it in the new GANGBUSTERS™ Roaring Twenties Role-Playing Game.

TSR™ The Game Wizards

© 1980 TSR Hobbies Inc All Rights Reserved

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS and GANGBUSTERS are trademarks owned by TSR Hobbies, Inc.
©1982 TSR Hobbies, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BEST CRITICAL/BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF 1983: *The Dark Side of Genius: The Life of Alfred Hitchcock* by Donald Spoto (Little, Brown)

BEST FACT CRIME OF 1983: *Very Much a Lady* by Shana Alexander (Little, Brown)

BEST JUVENILE NOVEL OF 1983: *The Callender Papers* by Cynthia Voight (Atheneum)

BEST MOTION PICTURE OF 1983: *Gorky Park,* screenplay by Dennis Potter, based on the novel by Martin Cruz Smith, an Orion Pictures release

BEST TELEFEATURE OF 1983: *Mickey Spillane's Murder Me, Murder You,* written by Bill Stratton (CBS-TV)

BEST EPISODE IN A TELEVISION SERIES OF 1983: "The Pencil," *Philip Marlowe,* written by Jo Eisinger (HBO)

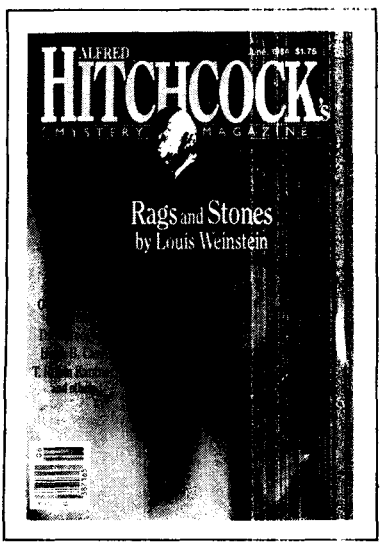
Finally, a couple of items about the stories in this issue. We have for you a new story, "Allergic to Death," by Al and Mary Kuhfeld, authors of "An Ill Wind," which we published in April. It has occurred to us that our readers might like to know that Mrs. Kuhfeld is one and the same person as Mary Monica Pulver, author (or co-author) of several other stories that have appeared in these pages in recent months ("Pass the Word," "All at Sea," and "The Quality of Mercy," the latter with Libbet Proudfit). And we are particularly glad to have a new Donald Olson tale, "Crimes and Triumphs," this time around. It's been some three years since the last one, but Mr. Olson has been contributing stories to AHMM since 1970—more than forty, all told. It's nice to have him back.

Cathleen Jordan, Editor; *Lois Adams,* Associate Editor; *Amy Stout,* Editorial Assistant; *Ralph Rubino,* Art Director; *Gerry Hawkins,* Associate Art Director; *Ron Kuliner,* Art Editor; *Marianne Weldon,* Associate Designer; *Theresa Parisi,* Art Assistant; *Carl Bartee,* Director of Manufacturing; *Carole Dixon,* Production Manager; *Lauren C. Council,* Production Assistant; *Cynthia Manson,* Subsidiary Rights Manager; *Barbara Bazyn,* Manager, Contracts & Permissions; *Michael Dillon,* Circulation Director, Retail Marketing; *Paul Pearson,* Newsstand Operations Manager; *Kathy Tully-Cestaro,* Circulation Manager, Subscriptions; *Irene Bozoki,* Classified Advertising Director; *Jamie Fillon,* Advertising Manager; *William F. Battista,* Advertising Director (New York: 212-557-9100; Chicago: 312-346-0712; Los Angeles: 213-785-3114).

Joel Davis, President & Publisher; *Leonard F. Pinto,* Vice President & General Manager; *Leonard H. Habas,* Vice President, Circulation; *Fred Edinger,* Vice President, Finance.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WATCH OUT!



ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE
First-rate, spine-tingling tales of suspense guaranteed to thrill and perplex even the most sophisticated mystery buff.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE
At least 130 pages of intriguing mystery fiction every month... plus a mysterious photograph contest, a puzzle and reviews. Be mesmerized by today's top authors. Watch out for cunning murders, intricate plots, and clues on every page. Subscribe today.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE
P.O. Box 1932 • Marion, Ohio 43306

Please send me 12 big issues for only $14.97, a savings of $6.03 off the regular newsstand price of $21.00.

☐ Bill me ☐ Payment enclosed

Name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

D4H91

Or call toll-free 1-800-247-2160 (In Iowa call 1-800-362-2860)

Guarantee! If you are not completely satisfied with AHMM, you may cancel your subscription at any time & receive a full cash refund for all unmailed copies!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



FICTION

Major Problems

by Dan A. Sproul

"You want to give me that again?" Deke said, covering the phone mouthpiece. He motioned to me from across the squad room. "Pick up the other line, J.J. Sounds like this guy ain't plugged in all the way."

I picked up the extension on my desk. The voice on the other end rasped from too many smokes. He sounded drunk.

"What was your name again?" Deke asked him.

Illustration by Marc Yankus

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Josh . . . Josh Clayton. Like I was tellin' you, when we dug up the major he weren't alone. T'ain't natural, you know."

"Let me get this straight," Deke said. "You say you dug up a body?"

"Dug up nine of 'em."

"Where are you calling from anyway?"

"I'm here at Carl's Tavern. Don't have no phone at that old cemetery."

"What old cemetery is that?" I asked him.

"Gates Cemetery. Down there off 17. Some of them caskets in the back rows was washin' out into the creek. Erosion, don't you know. County sent us out to transplant the back row. Almost lost a couple of them into the creek. Some been there since before the Civil War. Old Veterans' Cemetery in the back part."

"So what you calling here for? This is Homicide."

"Well, sir, they's damn sure dead now, ain't they? So where should I call? And like I was sayin', we dug up the major, Major Ambrose De Kalb, Fourth Ohio Volunteers. Says on the stone he fell at the Second Manassas. Well, what you gonna do. There we all was, takin' a beer break . . . what the hell. We opened up the lid for a look-see. There the old boy was, sure enough. All laid out in a fancy dress uniform. Had on his sword and everythin'. Kinda black and peeling in the face, but not too bad a shape considerin' he'd been down there since 1865. Thing was, layin' atop of him was this other soldier . . . a corporal. Wrong war, too. Had on a First World War uniform. T'ain't natural."

Gates Cemetery was about a half hour out of town off County Road 17. Technically, it was still in the city, still in Metro jurisdiction, but the countryside was undeveloped. Growth out from the city had gone in other directions, leaving the area somewhat desolate.

Josh Clayton was waiting outside Carl's place. We loaded him into the back seat. The cemetery was another two miles down the road. A small secondary road led back to a battered archway. Withered and decaying, it served as the entrance to the burial area. The surrounding wild was barely in check, indicating neglect, disuse, or both.

Josh had passed out in the back seat. I had to jostle him awake. "Okay, come on, Josh. Let's take a look at the general."

"Major," he corrected me.

We made our way past a maze of tombstones and grotesque statuary forming bizarre angles and lumps in the deepening dusk. You could hear the fast-running creek before

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you could see it. High water had taken its toll on the embankment. Fifty—maybe sixty—feet farther down the bank, a dim, oblong outline poked out from the shoreline about five feet above the water. They would have to get that one out soon, or they would lose it for sure.

"It's late." Josh announced. Apparently something of a revelation for him. "Guess the other guys already took in the other boxes and knocked off for the day. I told them to leave the major for you guys to see." He pointed off into the growing darkness. "There he is, over there."

The coffin was ornate, with fancy brass outfittings now blackened and broken. It was made of wood, probably oak. Still, after more than a century in the ground, it remained solid, imposing, completely intact. And there they were. Not a pile of bones as I'd expected. The major lay on his back, full beard, the buttons on his coat tarnished black. The fleshy part of his nose was gone. The skin, stretched taut across a fleshless face, was reddish black, the hue of a late autumn leaf. His eyelids had caved in, as if nothing was supporting them from below. The brittle skin had begun to crack and separate like a sun-baked riverbottom, exposing bits of gleaming bone beneath.

The corporal, on quick inspection, looked in worse shape than the major. His scalp was missing. Bare skull gleamed in the waning light. I could barely identify his hair. It was still attached to what was left of his scalp. The whole mess was matted inside his military cap lying off to the side, near the major's boots. As if the entire melange had been tossed in as an afterthought.

The corporal lay on his side partly covering the major, his face pressed against a hard oak slab, corporal's chevrons displayed upward toward the lid. Beside the casket lay a mound of moist earth, and the gaping hole that had recently housed the odd couple. Other graves on either side had already been filled in, the caskets removed according to Josh.

"So where do we go from here?" Deke asked me.

"Get the medical examiner out here. See what he says." I turned to ask Josh if they had opened any of the other caskets, but he had already gone back to the car. We found him zonked out in the back seat.

The M.E. took the boys, casket and all, down to the morgue to look them over. I got back to my apartment after eleven. It's an old place, cheap and comfortable. The elevator hasn't worked since I moved in, about six years ago now. I always stop

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to check my mailbox before going up the three flights to my nook. The mailboxes are pigeonholed on one side of the foyer. Each has a little glass door with a name on it. I found mine in the dim light. J.J. Justin, short for Jellyroll Jacob Justin. My father was what you might call an aficionado of a certain early jazz musician. 'Course, nobody ever calls me Jellyroll . . . not twice anyway. Just Lieutenant or J.J. I decided early on I wasn't going to suffer acute embarrassment because of my old man's perverted adolescent mentality.

Damn funny case, this one. If it was a case. A corporal from the First World War doesn't dig up a superior officer from the Civil War and crawl in with him. Not without help. Somebody has to put the dirt back. But why?

There was one letter. The yearly thank-you card from my ex-wife celebrating the fifth anniversary of our divorce. She was probably still honked off because of the Nair I put in her shampoo. So what was I supposed to do, shoot the guy? I trudged up the stairs, hoping a night's sleep would bring things into focus.

It didn't. My partner, Detective Sergeant Second Grade Deke Colby, nicknamed "The Deacon" by many for obvious reasons, did nothing in moderation. He drank too much. He smoked too much. He ate too much.He stood six four. He was fat, out of condition. He puffed when he walked. It's doubtful he could get five out of twenty words in a *Reader's Digest* vocabulary test. Two things he had going for him. He was doggedly persistent in police matters, and he always made it to work on time. That means he got there ahead of me. He was waiting for me by the coffee machine in the hall.

"We checked out all the other coffins them guys took. They hauled them down to that new cemetery by the lake."

"Any more duets?" I asked.

"Just one to a stiff. Looks like the major was the only one to get lonesome."

I fed the coffee machine a quarter, punched the double nondairy creamer.

"Do we know yet who the corporal is?"

Deke followed me into the squad room. "Not yet," he said. "I got a plot map of the cemetery. The place has been full up for years, not much traffic out there any more. Didn't keep the records up too hot. We know who bought the plots originally, but some were later sold off in parts—hard to figure who's planted where. A lot of the old headstones are either broken up or weathered so bad you can't make out the name."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I plopped down behind my desk. "What do you think, Deke? Why would somebody dig up two bodies, put two in one box, then fill in the holes again?"

"Beats me. Maybe they was stealin' coffins."

I set Deke to work compiling a list of men buried in Gates Cemetery between 1917 and 1919. Especially corporals. It figured that if the corporal was buried in his uniform, he probably died in the war or shortly after.

Dr. Kanjanki, the medical examiner, called at ten A.M. Kanjanki was from India originally. Studied medicine at the University of Michigan. He turned to pathology late in life. Claimed all the X-rays he had taken during his private practice were making him sterile. Even to this day, it is rumored, he wears a lead apron over his vitals to keep out the background count.

"How the jewels holdin' up, doc?"

"Your attempt at levity is disgusting. And so are you, JELLYROLL." He screamed that last into the phone. It is fortunate for him he does not say this to my face or I would have to alter part of his. We insulted each other viciously for at least a minute and a half before getting on to business.

"So what did you find out," I asked him.

"What was I supposed to find out?"

"How did they die, for starters?"

"The bearded one with the sword has a hole in his chest. Gunshot wound. Caliber unknown . . . But soft—didn't make it all the way through."

"Minnie ball," I provided. "Can you tell how long he's been dead?"

"I am not a psychic."

"A guess."

"More than fifty years."

"How do you know?"

"I don't. It's only a guess. But he's been embalmed, and a good job it was from the looks of it. Most of the tissue is still intact, but extremely dried out. It would take a long time to get so brittle."

"How about the corporal?"

"The other had no wounds. Difficult to determine the cause of death without extensive tests. But I think disease. Probably diphtheria from the appearance of his throat."

"How long dead?"

"How the hell should I know? He's been embalmed, like the other one. Don't you have the date of his death?"

"We don't even know who he is."

"Wonderful."

"Wait a minute. Did they embalm people during the Civil War?"

"Haven't you ever seen a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mummy? They've been embalming people since 5000 B.C. Catch you later, Jellyroll."

After Kanjanki hung up on me, I decided to do a bit of embalming research on my own. They did indeed know the science of embalming in 1865. In fact, it was used primarily on casualties of the Civil War, since many had to be transported over long distances. So it was back to square one. I told Deke to arrange for a new box for the corporal on the county's tab, and to take the pair down to Lakeside Cemetery for burial.

It might have ended there except for Deke. I doubt we could have got permission to dig up the whole cemetery looking for an empty hole. Not knowing when the corporal had been removed from his resting place posed a problem. If he had been buried around 1918, his removal could have been any time in the last sixty-five years. Obviously, whoever did it never expected to be found out. Except for an extraordinary set of circumstances, the corporal and the major would have shared the same hole throughout eternity.

Since no homicide had been committed, there was no real pressure to continue. On the other hand, somebody had gone to a lot of trouble. It was so damn bizarre, curiosity won out when Deke brought in the lead.

He tossed the pile of papers on the corner of my already overflowing desk. "The plot map for the cemetery is a washout," he reported. "But I think I hit the jackpot with the obituaries for 1917 and 1918." He laid his clipboard down on the last clear spot on the desk. "Six privates, one sergeant, two corporals, and a navy guy, all died in the war, all buried in Gates Cemetery."

"Only two corporals—that's a break."

Deke smiled broadly, handing over Xeroxes of the two obits. The first belonged to Armand Lepolo, age thirty-three. Corporal, U.S. Marines, 4th Marine Brigade. Killed in the battle of Belleau Wood, May 18, 1918.

I handed the sheet back to Deke. "Not that one. He was a corporal in the Marines. Our boy was army. Besides, this guy was thirty-three years old. Our corporal looks to be just a boy, no more than twenty or twenty-five. And he didn't die in any battle like this fellow."

The other sheet belonged to Nicholas R. Compton, age nineteen. Corporal, U.S. Army, United States Expeditionary Forces. Died in the service of his country. Funeral services Miller Funeral Home . . . interment, Gates. . . . Survived by his father, Leland Compton, two sisters . . . Florence Comp-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ton . . . Mrs. John (Phoebe) Didler. Preceded in death by . . .

Deke looked expectant, even gleeful. He knew.

"This could be him all right," I admitted. "Our best chance is with the married sister if she's still alive, and didn't remarry or move away."

Deke shook his head. "I don't know, J.J. She'd be pretty old by now—maybe a hundred. She's probably dead."

"Well, if she married in her twenties, before 1918. Let's see, figure she was probably two to five years older than her brother . . . figure five years. Her brother was nineteen in 1918—means he was born in 1899. Add five years . . . ah, 1894 to 1983. She'd be eighty-nine. It's possible. She might even be younger."

"Or older," Deke pointed out.

"What the hell. Let's see if we can find any Didlers in the telephone book."

Deke started laughing in his bizarre way. Sounded like a chicken squawking for its life. "I don't know about the telephone book. Got a lot of diddlers over in Vice."

"Funny."

There were four.

"Hello. This is Amy talking."

"I'd like to speak with Lawrence Didler, please."

"Do I know who you are?"

"This is the police department."

"My daddy's not home. And he's not a crook."

"Can I speak to your mother?"

"Mommy's gone potty."

From a distance. "Amy, get away from that phone!" Slight pause. "Hello?" An older female voice.

"Hello. Mrs. Didler, this is Lieutenant Justin with the police department. We are trying to locate a Mrs. Phoebe Didler."

"Aunt Phoebe?"

"Then you know her?"

"She's my husband's aunt. If it's about that fellow she poked in the eye with her cane, they cleared that up. He was trying to steal her purse."

Phoebe Didler still lived just outside the city in Big Rock. According to her niece, she lived with a married daughter, a Mrs. George Pullman. The place wasn't hard to find. Fourteen Holly Lane was an estate, the Pullman estate. There was no thirteen, twelve, or fifteen—just fourteen. We found out later the only other house on Holly Lane was being used by Pullman's groundskeeper—you really couldn't call a guy who keeps that much grass mowed a gardener.

Deke rang the chimes while I eyeballed a couple of gaggles of geese frolicking in a nearby pond.

The door was opened by the shortest butler I ever saw. I haven't seen too many butlers,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

though. I guess I figured them all to be tall, solemn types. This little fellow came to just above Deke's belt buckle. He was decked out in a Visa Card blue blazer and matching pants with a white shirt—no tie. Embroidered over the left breast pocket was the word "Craddock."

"Yes?" he said.

An embarrassing moment passed as Deke addressed the top of the butler's head. The little fellow answered into Deke's necktie, refusing to suffer the indignity of looking nearly straight up.

"Do you have an appointment to see Mrs. Didler?"

Deke showed him a badge. He led us, taking quick choppy steps like a film running too fast, into what must have been the library.

"He looks like a Munchkin," Deke observed after he left.

The four walls of the room were jammed solid with books. Just a single window hidden behind heavy drapes broke it up.

"So how exactly do we get her to pinpoint the spot?" Deke asked, looking for pictures in a copy of the complete works of A.E. Housman.

"The cemetery is a maze. She's not going to be able to show us the grave site on that plot map. His headstone is either missing or indecipherable—anyway, we can't find it. I think maybe we'll have to take her out there." I pulled back the drape. Got another look at the geese.

"Can I help you gentlemen?"

She took us both by surprise. I flipped the drape back quickly. Deke shoved Housman back in his slot with some fumbling. She looked in good shape to be pushing ninety. Didn't look a day over sixty.

"Mrs. Didler?" I asked.

"I'm Naomi Pullman. Mrs. Didler is my mother. Is there something I can do for you? She's not at all well right now."

I showed her my I.D.

"Craddock said you were the police," she acknowledged. "I can't imagine what you would want with my mother."

"You might be able to help," I told her. "We're trying to find out where Nicholas Compton is buried."

"Nicholas Compton?"

"Your mother's brother," I clarified. "If you know where he's buried and can show us, we won't have to bother Mrs. Didler."

"I'm not sure—I think it's that old cemetery east of the city—I forget the name. I've only been there once or twice. I was just a little girl. George, my husband, he would know. He used to take Mother out there quite often before we moved."

"We know the cemetery,"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Deke said. "We just don't know *where* in the cemetery."

"Well, maybe if you talked to George . . ."

"So where can we find him?" I asked.

She appeared flustered. "I'm not sure. He's . . . ah . . . on a business trip right now."

"Maybe if we talked with Mrs. Didler . . ." I suggested.

"She's in her sitting room. Perhaps I should go with you. She's not well, and she's getting on in years."

"How old is she?" Deke couldn't resist.

"Eighty-seven this November."

I shot Deke the smuggest look I could muster up on short notice.

Mrs. Didler wasn't what I expected. Picture a frail, bent over, wrinkled up little gnome of a woman with veins popping out all over her hands. Now forget it. Wrinkles for sure, and glasses, but scrub the rest. She sat slim and upright in a straight-backed chair. On the oval table before her was a hand of solitaire nearly won.

"Mom, these are policemen. They want to talk to you."

The old woman didn't even look up. She played a three of diamonds on a four of hearts.

"If it's about that little pervert I laid out with my cane—forget it. I'm not pressing charges. He learned not to fool with me no more."

Mrs. Pullman pounced on her sharply, alarm in her voice. "Mother, it's not about that!"

"What do they want, then?"

Deke pointed to the cards. "You can't play a red three on a red four."

"Young man," she shot back, "nobody in the whole civilized world could possibly give a damn. Anyway, I almost had this game won."

"We'd like to talk to you about Nicholas Compton," I broke in. It got her attention.

"Nicky died in the war."

"Ah . . . yes, we know that, Mrs. Didler. But a problem has come up." I found it difficult to express to her just what the problem was. I figured the best way was to start at the beginning. I told her about the creek washing out the graves, about the need to move them. I told her about the discovery, Nicky in the same box with the major. I don't know what kind of reaction I expected. She sat looking down at the cards for a full twenty seconds before she spoke.

"What kind of a pervert would do something like that?"

"We need to know where . . ."

"By God!" She cut me off. "I bet George had a hand in this. Wait till I see the little scum."

"Mother, you don't mean that."

"Yes, I do, too. He never liked taking me out there—crabbed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and bitched all the time. Just like the little weasel to pull something like this."

It was getting ouchy for Mrs. Pullman. "How can you say that about George after all he's done for you—letting you live here and everything?"

"Ha!" the old woman shouted. "It's easy. He's no damn good. Knew it the first time I seen him. Told you so, too. All them scabby looking friends, the way he leaves you here alone for months at a time. He don't tell you what he's doin' or when he'll be back. He's got another woman, you can be sure of that. And as far as me livin' here . . ."

"Please, Mother. We have guests."

The old woman turned back to Deke and me. "He's your man. Couldn't be nobody else."

I explained to her that while George might be a crud of the first order, we were mainly interested in finding the location of Nicholas Compton's burial spot.

"Well, I can show you that easy enough," she said.

"When was the last time you were out there?" I asked her.

"I used to go every Memorial Day when we lived closer. It had to be maybe a year before we moved. Let's see, we moved out here in 1960. So I guess my last visit was in 1959."

"That's almost twenty-five years," Deke pointed out. "How come you haven't been back for so long?"

"How am I goin' to get there? George won't take me no more. Naomi don't drive. And I don't trust that midget they hired. He can barely see over the steering wheel."

"Craddock is not a midget," Mrs. Pullman contributed.

"Anyway, it's a lot farther over there now," Phoebe continued, ignoring her daughter. "It's hard for me to get around since I broke my hip some years back. Never did mend right after the operation. I told them fool doctors . . ."

I cut her off before we had to suffer through a hip operation. "Do you think you could find the spot again?"

"You get me out there. I'll find it."

It was more than twenty-five miles to Gates Cemetery from the Pullman estate in Big Rock. Mrs. Didler insisted on sitting in the front seat. So I drove and Deke got in the back. She kept the conversation going. Mostly, she talked about what a low-life George Pullman was.

"What does he do, anyway?" Deke finally asked. "Must make some big bucks to keep that place up."

"Ha!" said Mrs. Didler, in her peculiar way. "Never held a steady job. He's a bum . . . lives off stock dividends. He put a lot of money from his inheritance

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into IBM and Polaroid back in the early sixties."

"Then his family had money," I said.

Phoebe fixed her stare on me over the top of her rimless frames. "His father was a bum, too. Ran off when George was twelve. His mother was an alcoholic, I met her at the wedding. She died soon after the marriage. George had an uncle that left him the money."

"When was that?" I asked, more to keep the conversation going than anything else.

She pondered on it for a bit. "Around 1960 or thereabouts . . . a few years after I moved in with them. Yes . . . it was 1960 because that's the year we moved into the big house. They would have starved for sure if it hadn't been for my husband John's insurance. We was all living in this ratty little place over a drugstore. I had to pay the rent. George couldn't hold a job. Worked in a filling station when he could find work. And those friends he brought home . . . especially the fat one with the ear. Ugliest man I ever saw—he used to leer at me through those little pig eyes."

"The ear?" I said.

"He had a rubber ear," she explained. "He took it off once and dropped it in George's glass of beer."

Deke came to attention in the back seat. "A rubber ear, you say? Do you happen to recall his name?"

"It's been so long. I don't remember any more. But he looked like a big fat toad. Belched out loud . . . They probably heard him in the next building."

"Something?" I said over my shoulder to the back seat.

Deke rubbed his balding forehead. "That sure rings a bell. It's right on the tip of my mind . . ."

Deke was still mulling over "the ear" when we arrived at Gates Cemetery. I drove as far back as the road would take us. The place looked less menacing in daylight but still rough and unkempt. We had to help Phoebe over the rough terrain. She went like a bird dog to a spot maybe twenty yards away from major's place, going in toward the front, away from the creek.

There was no headstone, only a stone plaque in the ground, covered with dirt and weeds, the name worn completely away.

I shoved a tree branch in the ground on the spot and we took Phoebe home. On the way back to the station, Deke kept mumbling about "the ear."

"How long you been on the force?" he finally asked me.

I thought about it. Five years in uniform, fourteen as a detective. "Nineteen years."

"Maybe it was before your time. I've been around almost

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

twenty-eight years. Started out in Robbery when I first made detective. I remember something about a rubber ear. I'm going over to Robbery when we get back; it may be in one of my early reports."

When we got back, I made arrangements to get a crew out there to open up the grave the next morning. The court order was not a problem since the hole was already presumed empty. Of course, that's what we wanted to find out. Deke returned in a flurry just as I hung up.

"Fat Freddie Bollin!" he shouted.

"What?"

"The rubber ear. It belonged to Fat Freddie."

"So?"

"I'd just been assigned to Robbery. Everybody was looking for Fat Freddie . . . the Roland Armored Car job."

He waited, making sure my handsome features recorded no understanding whatsoever, before proceeding to explain.

"We figured Manny Jenkins for the inside man. He was a Roland guard. Two other guys knocked over a Roland truck for 3.2 million. Manny opened the door for them when they threatened the driver. Manny was killed during the robbery by one of the holdup guys. Fat Freddie was involved, we were sure of it. The two holdup men wore stocking masks, but the driver remembered the fat one had a lopsided head, like he didn't have no ear. Everything fit. Freddie had taken the fall for armed robbery twice before. We figured he didn't wear his ear on this caper, or it slipped inside the mask. Anyway, we pulled him in. But we couldn't pin it on him without the money. We kept tabs on him for over a year. Then he just disappeared."

"The date of the robbery?" I asked.

Deke checked the notes in his hand. "August 12, 1959."

"When did Phoebe say George came into that inheritance?"

"Nineteen fifty-nine or sixty, wasn't it?"

I leaned back in my chair to ponder it. "You say they heisted 3.2 million. What was it, cash, gold, securities . . .?"

He looked at his notes. "Small bills. Mostly fives, tens, and twenties. Not serialized. On the way to the Federal Reserve to be destroyed."

"That would make a pretty big bundle, wouldn't it?"

Deke was fat but thorough. The notes came out again. "Five locked canvas bags."

"What if George didn't have a rich uncle?" I tossed out. "If George and Freddie pulled the heist, they would need a safe place to let the money cool off. Where do you figure they would

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

stash five big canvas bags?"

Deke broke into a grin. "Nicky's grave."

I nodded. "Yes, but there wasn't enough room for Nicky and the money both. So they put Nicky in with the major."

"By God. I bet you're right—that's got to be how it was. But I wonder why they picked the major. Why not use the next grave over? That's a long way to tote a dead guy."

"Let's consider—they find out they got a dead body on their hands. First off, they don't have to worry about anybody raising a stink over Nicky's grave being fresh. George just makes sure Phoebe don't visit anytime soon. Now, what are their options? The money has got to stay in the coffin; left in the ground unprotected, it would quickly deteriorate. They want to plant Nicky someplace nobody's going to visit. Fresh-turned dirt would raise questions. The oldest graves are in the back—a freshly dug grave back there wasn't likely to be noticed by those visiting the front part of the cemetery—plus it's doubtful the major had any living relatives visiting him on a regular basis—not after a hundred years."

"Turned out to be a poor choice," Deke observed. "But if they already got the money out, Nicky's grave will be empty."

"We'll see tomorrow. We have to be out there at ten A.M. for the grand opening."

When we arrived at Gates the next morning, Josh Clayton and two of his men were leaning on their shovels near the major's spot.

"How you guys doin'?" Josh greeted us. "Bet you wonder why we don't just bring a backhoe out here, don't you?"

I decided to lie to him. "Yeah . . . I wondered about that."

"Can't get one in here without we tear up a bunch of graves. They don't put 'em this close together in the new layouts."

I went over to where I'd shoved the stick in the ground. "Right here, boys. Let's see what's down there."

There's something about watching a professional at work, whether it's a quarterback, a bricklayer, or a gravedigger. To a layman, the professional seems to do the difficult effortlessly. It took these professionals less than twelve minutes to reach the casket, throw some ropes on it, and hoist it out.

Several things were obvious at once. The coffin wasn't empty. And it wasn't closed tight, either. Something was sticking out from under the lid. I motioned to Josh. The rusted hinges on the old bronzed coffin yielded with a groan.

ROLAND ARMORED CAR was stenciled prominently on all five canvas bags. The broken

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

locks hung askew from several of the grommet-punched leather tops.

A corner of one of the bags had kept the lid from closing properly. A skeleton, with bits and pieces of crusted, moldering flesh stuck here and there, lay on top of the bags, a ghastly guardian.

It was pretty clear that whoever was guarding the empty bags hadn't gotten the same treatment the major and Nicky had benefited from—body fluids had not been drained. No precisely measured mixture of formaldehyde, alcohol, mercury, and zinc chloride had been pumped into the arteries. The lid's not being sealed tight had allowed bacteria inside to do their work. Hardly anything remained but the baggy clothes and the smell. Sleeves and handkerchiefs went to noses.

"Should I check the clothes for some I.D.?" Deke muffled through his handkerchief, moving toward the grisly inhabitant.

I raised a hand to stay him. "You won't need to," I said. I knew where to look. It was lying near the skull, just inside a bag top. I held it up for Deke to see.

"The rubber ear," he confirmed.

I stuck the ear in my pocket. It was about all that remained of Fat Freddie. I motioned to Josh to close the lid so we could all take a breath.

"What do you figure, J.J.?"

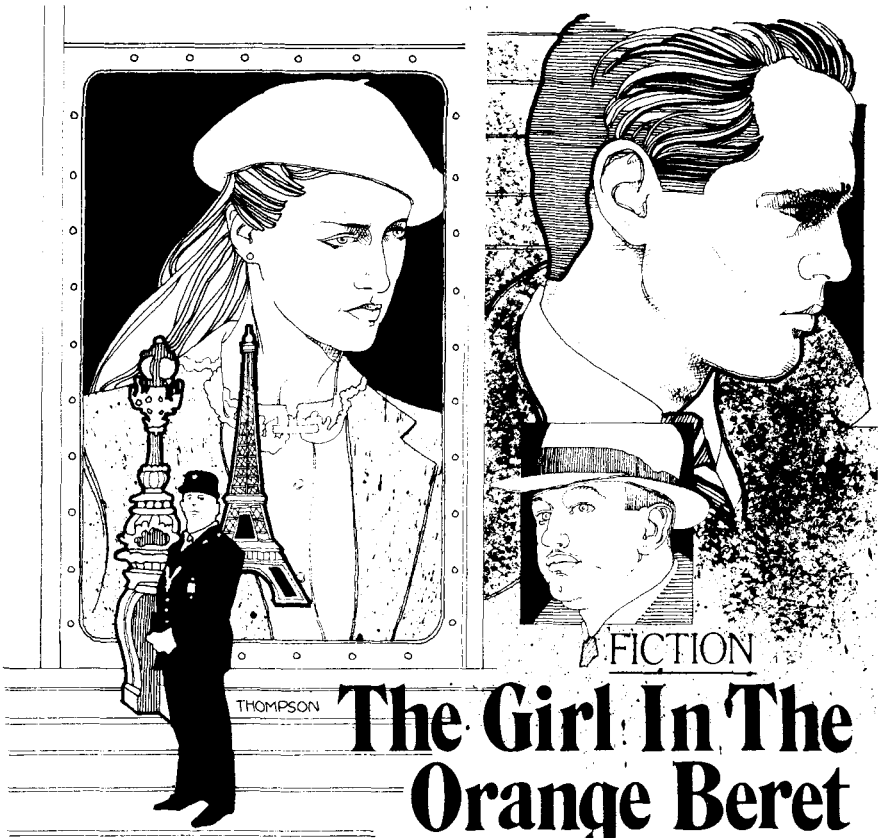
"They waited a year to let it cool off. When they came to dig it up, George got his chance to get it all. Freddie was hot. As soon as he started spending big money, the cops would have been on him like bugs after a light bulb. George must have known it. And if Freddie took the fall, George had to figure he wouldn't be far behind. He left Fat Freddie here with a bullet in his head. Had to be—Freddie and full bags wouldn't have fit in there together. Nicky and the bags didn't, and he was just a little thing."

The Deacon chuckled. "I was just thinkin'. Won't George be surprised?"

"Yeah," I agreed. "Phoebe was right about him all along. He's no damn good."

We started back toward the car to call in Kanjanki. The best thing to come out of this for me was thinking about how Kanjanki would grumble and bitch when he had to poke around in what was left of Fat Freddie. I decided to hold back the ear—just for a short spell—just long enough to let Kanjanki do the extensive dental X-rays necessary for a positive I.D.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



FICTION

The Girl In The Orange Beret

by Lee Russell

Jedson Waite stood breathing in the damp earth odors of fall. No leaves had turned, but already the sun's rays through the trees slanted differently. A bird chirped from the hedge. Gina, in her second-hand Fiat and the orange sweater knitted by her mother, had just driven down the driveway and, defiantly alone, off to college, never really to return.

His wife's voice drifted from a side window. "I'd planned just a cold lunch. I had no idea it had turned so chilly."

"Okay by me. Want any help?"

"No."

He wandered back to the patio, where empty coffee cups sat on the metal-mesh table. Young Jed had returned to Princeton the day before. Whole lives, whole persons who might never have existed had things gone differently on just one day in Paris twenty years before. He felt appalled that the crucial

Illustration by George Thompson

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

life choices and chances present themselves so early—not to the capable mature, perhaps desperately needing them, but to the unformed, inexperienced young. He had wanted an orderly life and he had had one, marred only by an errant blip here and there; and heretofore the beep of a foreign car or a glimpse of bittersweet orange had nudged him merely into brief, pleasant nostalgia and not, as now, into a full shocking recognition of what he had once blundered into; of what had once been possible, and perhaps still was for all he knew; and of how the flow of life—broad and slow, allowing time for deciding, for correcting mistakes, for going back to do what has been left undone—can suddenly narrow and rush between gorge walls, allowing no time to think, no margin for error, and no going back.

Back then, it had been northern sunshine, a sidewalk café and traffic racketting across the Place de l'Opéra. He had sat, long legs cramped under a small table, feeling sick after three Cinzanos and two *limonades,* embarrassed at having sat too long over these and both annoyed and uneasy at finding himself being watched, past a raised newspaper, by a thickset man against the far café wall. But all that had ceased to matter as, with the passing quarter hours, the certainty had grown that Griselle was not going to come.

He, a small-town Iowan, who had just managed medical school on the insurance left by his mother, then this budgeted trip, this last fling before settling into public health service, had aspired to a five foot nine enchantress with silky, wheat-colored hair and sea-green eyes. Among the August throng of Americans heading for American Express around the corner, nothing remotely like Griselle had appeared in the last three hours. Nothing like her had ever appeared in Jed's life before, or was likely, he had known, ever to appear in it again.

When, in a drift of silky gray-green, she had first crossed the ship's dining salon the preceding June, he had looked, along with every other dining male, but never considered trying for her. He had read her as East, Miss So-and-So's School, some New York glamor job, and Money. Later, however, leaning on a mezzanine rail to watch the dancing below, he had seen her alone at a floorside table and something about her bright, open face seen in profile—some slight droop to the mouth corner, perhaps—had caught at his heart. The band had played,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

taken a break, and resumed, and still she sat, quiet, erect, slim arms on the white cloth. He had straightened slowly from the rail, then skimmed down the open, curving stairs. For *her* he *did* have something to offer, on a dance floor, anyway—his six foot two inches of height.

They had danced that night and the next and the next; and, although there were other vacationing students in Second Class—beneficiaries, like himself, of convention cancellations—for the whole crossing he had had her to himself.

Days, they had played shipboard games—she in what his mother would have called "beautifully unobtrusive clothes," topped, however, by a downy, vividly orange beret—or lain, wrapped against the Atlantic chill, watching gray water swell against gray skies and talking trifles, the wind seeming to catch up her laughter and toss it out to sea. Nights, they had danced and spoken scarcely at all. Then the last night out, the weather having turned balmy, they had strolled out late and stood watching the moonpath shimmer on the dark, heaving water. She had spoken of her parents' air crash. Insurance had seen her through school, too; engineering school, Jed was astonished to learn. And he, holding his voice steady, had told of his mother's last year of agony and of how it had torn him into a daily death to watch helplessly the sufferings of the woman who had been his whole family since his father deserted them sixteen years before. They had previously discovered interests in common, passing over those not held in common; and it had seemed a final bond that they, neither, had brothers or sisters or any close family or, in fact, any "home" any place, any more. Each had left his few possessions with a classmate resident in his college town.

Off the dance floor, he had touched her only accidentally or protectively as they climbed shifting companionways or strolled on unsteady decks. Something had warned him: "Don't grab." But, on that moonlit deck, her shadowed eyes had invited and her lips leaving his had trembled. She had insisted, however, that after their three days in Paris each go his planned way.

"I think this is important, but we could be wrong. We could sink and never surface till too late. We're neither of us casual persons. Let's see how we feel in August."

They had exchanged itineraries and she herself had set the date: noon, Café de la Paix, August 24th, the day of her return

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sailing, two weeks before his own. He had never for one moment doubted that she would come.

Throughout his travels, he had accumulated Griselle's picture postcards in his side jacket pockets. He now again drew out the last six—the thickset man still watching—and for the third time in as many hours read her last: "Remember: noon, August 24th, Café de la Paix. So much to tell—some funny, some odd, but all wonderful. You the same, I'm sure. Till then and there. Missed you terribly. Griselle."

He pressed his hands against the table edge, then repocketed the cards, rose, tipped his chair against the table, and walked back and up to the lounge. To the chic attendant, he gave the phone number of the small Left Bank hotel they had stayed at in June, then, although in no doubt, asked her the date.

"August 24th, monsieur."

"And the time?"

"Three thirty-seven."

"And there is only one Café de la Paix? I mean, there isn't a chain or anything?"

"Chain" had to be explained, but finally, masking obvious shock, she assured him that there was only one and this was it.

The thickset man, newspaper in hand, arrived at the attendant's counter as he, Jed, entered his assigned booth. Mechanics completed, he heard the voice of the hotel owner's elegant young nephew:

"Hallo. Ici l'Hotel des Lilas."

Jed suppressed his irritation at the voice. "Hello. This is Jed Waite. I stayed with you—"

"Ah, yes. The friend of Mademoiselle Griselle Adams."

There had also been the way he had looked at Griselle and what Jed had surmised he had been saying to her in his too rapid French as they picked up or dropped off keys.

"Is Miss Adams there?"

"No, Monsieur Waite. Miss Adams is not yet returned."

"But you expect her?"

"Yes, monsieur."

"Today?"

"Yes. From Spain. But only to collect the *baggage* she left with us last June."

"You still have her suitcase? A large green one?"

"But of course!"

"Well, all right then. Thanks."

Attendant-assisted, he then made a series of calls—while the thickset man phoned from the next booth. His own current hotel—the Lilas had been booked full—reported no messages. Griselle's steamship office reported her booking uncanceled and her boat train to leave at five. Then, after reaching three wrong train depots, he heard someone at the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

right one assure him that the Hendaya Express had indeed arrived on time and intact.

He returned to his table and signalled his waiter—Alain, he had heard him called—and asked what he owed. He paid, overtipped, stepped out into the sunlight, and stood with the sidewalk flow dividing around him. He had not thought past the moment of seeing Griselle. The thickset man was hurriedly paying off *his* waiter. A cab pulled up and discharged a passenger. Jed stepped into it and gave the driver the Lilas address.

In the small, dark, cool lobby, the nephew was sorting mail at his counter desk.

"Ah, Monsieur Waite." The look seemed meant to be both quizzical and knowing. "No, mademoiselle is still not arrived. Yes, one still expects her. And yes, we still have her *baggage*. I have had it brought up and here, as you can see, it is." He indicated the large gray-green case standing by his desk.

Jed thanked him and crossed to sit on the creaking wicker divan. He took a fingered copy of *Réalités* from the matching table, leafed through it, and put it back. He lit a Galois, feeling the rough throat heat, and began to feel hungry. He had eaten nothing since his seven A.M. croissant. He smoked three Galoises to the finger-searing ends, watched the outside door open occasionally to admit returning guests, then began seeing, in his mind's eye, Griselle arriving before the café, searching for him with puzzled eyes, and turning away. He returned to the counter desk, pushed across a coin, and asked the nephew to get him Alain at the Café de la Paix.

Delays followed misunderstandings, but finally Alain was saying, "I regret, monsieur, but no mademoiselle as you describe has arrived. None."

To his shock and shame, hunger was now gnawing at him, and visions of thick ham and cheese on crusty French bread displaced those of Griselle. He could smell and taste the food. No matter what had happened, Griselle was going to miss her boat train, so there was no telling how long it might be before she arrived. He had not asked whether there was a second Hendaya Express or a second boat train. He asked the nephew for paper, scribbled: "Be right back. Please, please wait, no matter what. Jed," and handed the note across.

"For Miss Adams. In case she comes before I get back."

The workman's café where they had breakfasted in June was just around the corner. A sandwich could not take more

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

than three minutes. He stepped out, swung right, and knocked stumbling into the thickset man from the café. Hurrying on, he threw back a curt "sorry" and reflected that if he, Jed, were being staked out as a rich American pickpocket or holdup prospect, somebody was going to be very disappointed.

At the café, the fat-stomached proprietor set the sandwich he ordered immediately onto the counter, but the thick bread had to be chewed. Jed chewed and swallowed and waved off beer, coffee, and wine. Then change had to be sent out for. When he finally reentered the hotel, Griselle's suitcase no longer sat by the desk.

He felt his pulse race. "She's here! Where?"

The nephew's glance met his and slid away.

"Did she take a room? Which room?"

"I am sorry, monsieur, but the instant you departed—"

Jed had already reached the foot of the stairs.

"—mademoiselle arrived, retrieved her *baggage,* and—"

Jed swung around. "You mean she's come and gone!"

"Unhappily, yes."

"But didn't you give her my note?"

"But certainly! But she was with friends. They had a car waiting—"

Jed glanced at his watch, then ran out to the narrow street, where, however, only a girl on a motor scooter and a *boulangère* sweeping her doorway moved. He sprinted to the boulevard and there found a cab. "Gare—the boat train station! *Vite!*" His feet pressed against the cab floor all the way.

As he ran into the station, its clock showed four fifty-eight. "Boat train! Boat train!" he called, and persons obligingly pointed. He was stopped, however, and directed to buy a platform ticket. He did so and turning, ticket in hand, heard the train, or some train, beep its departure.

When he reached the platform, the train was already moving. He strode, trotted, then ran alongside, looking desperately into windows, although Griselle need not, of course, be by a window. Then the train was passing him and he stopped. Faces, faces, faces, then the crazy orange beret, the swing of autumn hair—and the sea-green eyes looking through him as if he did not exist. The sound and the rush of air across his face increased as the train gathered speed. The last coach clattered by and, too late, he knew he should have jumped onto the train. But, at the moment of passing, she had turned

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the man opposite her, and the little whatever-it-had-been that had caught at his heart whenever she turned her head had been gone.

Jed wandered back to the station proper. He fought back his anguish and felt numb. The flash of her passing replayed itself again and again until gradually the flat face of the man opposite her grew, displacing hers. An ordinary face, yet wrong—and unaccountably familiar. It stayed with him until, as he emerged onto the busy boulevard, he recalled walking in West Berlin in July. He had felt uneasy and impelled to swing around, and when he had done so, it had been that face, he felt sure, he had seen fading back into the sidewalk crowd.

On the corner across and ahead was the large, red, mirror-columned café at which he and Griselle had once lunched. He was not hungry and did not want a drink but started toward it, and, just as traffic intervened, saw across the boulevard his thickset café man and a taller one in lightweight oatmeal tweed. They were parting, but both also headed toward the café. Anger flared briefly. If this man was, for whatever inconceivable reason, watching and following him, he was doing it with contemptuous carelessness. Jed had already learned that confrontations abroad, however, lead only to language difficulties and denials. The thickset man reached the sidewalk café and sat down at the first table. Jed continued to the intersection, crossed, and took a corner table near the sidewalk newspaper kiosk, behind the first row of mirrored columns. The tweed-suited man had already rounded the corner, and in a column mirror, Jed saw him sitting at the far side street end of the café.

Jed ordered a beer and felt again the anguish waiting to engulf him. He watched rendezvous achieved, while around him other solitaries sipped and read or watched the diminishing traffic while waiting for it to be time to eat. He pulled out Griselle's last six scenic-view cards again and read them in sequence, this time not as a lover but with attention to what they were saying. He found no hint, no warning, nothing but travel data and miss-you's, however, until on the third from last, his attention was caught by ". . . on the Spanish Steps the same intense man as on the Palma boat," and on the next to last, "So far my erratic path has recrossed with that of three different men. Peculiar—creepy even—but none my type, so don't worry. Small world and all that."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Just faces reseen. Faces. Offered a copy of either Griselle's passport photo or her graduation photo, he had chosen the latter. He did not pull it out. Instead, he thought about reseeing faces. Tourists do go to the same places. He reached into his other side jacket pocket for Griselle's earlier five cards and felt only fuzz and space. He searched through all his pockets and re-counted the six cards on the table. His waiter started forward, and Jed waved him back. Beyond him, the thickset man was dining. In the column mirror, Jed saw the tweed-suited one drop his glance to his newspaper and aperitif.

He could not have lost those cards. He had not had them out in days, and his pockets were deep and flapped. The thickset man was overtly watching—the man he had knocked into outside the Lilas. Or had it been the other way around? Jed felt inside his jacket and touched wallet and passport. No one would pick pockets for postcards. But then no pickpocket would expect postcards. He tried to remember what had been on them. Nothing of significance, he felt sure, any more than there had been on these last six. Nevertheless, he put the six inside with his passport and wallet. A busboy cleared Thickset's table, and a waiter served cheese and fruit. In the column mirror, Tweedsuit was now openly watching. Jed felt squeezed between them and suppressed the urge to bolt. Could Tweedsuit be spelling Thickset while Thickset ate? Dinner, Jed understood, was important to the French. But were these men French? Somehow, he felt not. In any case, and respectable as they looked, he did not, it now occurred to him, want to lead them back to his hotel. He motioned for a menu. Hunger was returning and better to be free of that, and these men, before the postponed but inevitable flood of really knowing that Griselle was gone.

He ordered substantially and ate slowly, needing but not interested in the food. Thickset was served coffee and brandy; Tweedsuit, another aperitif. Somewhere the sun set, and the streetlamp by the newspaper kiosk came on. By dessert, he had not outsat them, and to his other disinclinations was added that of having either of them behind him on dark streets. The changing café clientele added to his disquiet. He wanted to leave, but alone. Then, considering a washroom trip—would he be followed?—he remembered this tourist café's curious concession to Anglo-Saxon modesty.

It had two descending stair-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ways, marked respectively "Dames" and "Messieurs," but dames and messieurs parted decorously only to find themselves again face to face as both stairways ended below at the same landing. However, even if these men did not know this, the thickset one sat closer to the men's stairway than did Jed, and, whatever Jed did, one man could follow and the other wait.

Nevertheless, feeling impelled to act, Jed slipped franc notes inconspicuously onto the table, rose, and strolled to the kiosk, so obviously to buy a newspaper that neither the men nor the waiter was perturbed. Staying in view to Tweedsuit, he edged out of his waiter's sight and delayed over his purchase until the waiter hurried to his table, showed relief at finding money, and, since the café was now filling up, snapped his fingers for the table to be cleared at once. Two teenage girls grabbed the desirable table. Jed stepped back and saw the thickset man stop struggling to get his chair back from his table. Jed took a new table, nearer the men's stairs and from which he could not see Tweedsuit in a mirror, which meant that Tweedsuit could not see him.

Before he could order, Tweedsuit, carrying his newspaper folded, passed on the side street. He faced right to turn at the boulevard corner, then, perhaps at a signal from Thickset, crossed instead and continued along the narrow way toward the Seine.

Momentarily, Thickset was watching his receding back. Jed rose and strode to the men's stairs, seeing, at last glimpse, Thickset again trying to push away a table pulled too close. Once below his line of view, Jed took the steps two at a time, down to the landing, then halfway up the ladies' stairs, where he waited for the sound of steps descending. Then he ran the rest of the way up and out, dodged across the boulevard and side street, and entered the first open shop. He slipped behind a rack of books, took up the first book to hand, and, holding it open, watched and waited while his pulse and breathing calmed.

A customer came in. Another left. Finally Jed stepped cautiously out to the darkening boulevard. No familiar persons in view. And none on the side street as he turned onto it. Just occasional couples, twilight strollers, hand in hand or arms about waists or shoulders, as he followed the only route he felt sure of to the Seine and his hotel. These were the streets and this the time of day he and Griselle had most loved.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He reached the dusk-blue Seine and glanced back. He crossed and, on the quai, slowed abruptly to fade back among other walkers as he saw Tweedsuit ahead. His pulse picked up at this prospect of playing hunter instead of hunted. Tweedsuit, accustomed to being always follower, never followed, or having already assured himself that he was not being followed, never looked around. Jed felt a shaming, never-before-felt sense of power. But at the vast, traffic-swirling Place de la Concorde, he lost him. Playing stalker had, he knew, been only another tactic to delay feeling his loss. Nevertheless, as he walked up the Champs-Elysées, he glanced into each brightly-lit café and up and down all side streets. Occasionally, he looked behind him. Then, up one side street, he saw Tweedsuit entering an indoor café. He came right back out and Jed, having already turned onto the street, stood wavering between whether to get back around the corner or stay put or advance and risk encounter. A cab turned onto the otherwise empty street. Tweedsuit hailed it and got in and it drove off.

That ended that game, but Jed continued to the café and, through its window, saw three unoccupied tables—the bar hid most of the rest of the café. At one, a newspaper lay on a chair. Tweedsuit had not been carrying his newspaper when he came out but had had ample time at the mirror-columned café to finish it. As Jed started to turn away, a patron going to the bar jarred the chair, and from the newspaper's folds emerged the corner of a brightly-colored scenic view. Jed reached for the door, but before he touched it a large, roughly dressed man, who had approached silently, pushed by him, entered, and tipped a chair at that table. Jed, still outside, let the door close. The man fetched his drink, sat down, hooked a foot around a leg of the chair holding the newspaper, and began edging it closer and glancing at the paper—gradually appropriating it. Finally, he tossed down the rest of his drink, took up the paper, and rose. Jed moved to a closed shop several doors distant, propped a foot on a low windowsill, and unnecessarily retied a shoelace. The burly man emerged and strode back to the Champs-Elysées. Jed followed, passed around the Place de la Concorde again, then in a dark, deserted area below the Jeu de Paume, lost the man and simultaneously panicked at what he had been doing. This type might not be at all amiable

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

about finding himself being followed.

Jed walked on, however, and, rounding a corner, again saw the man ahead. He paced him, staying well back, and became aware that although the man did not look back he was proceeding evasively. He crossed and recrossed streets, stopped and started abruptly and twice circumambulated blocks, then entered the park. Suddenly ahead was the Seine and its sole footbridge, empty of pedestrians. Jed had to fall back farther and wait until the man had crossed. Then he followed swiftly, closing in for fear of losing him in the warren of dark streets behind the Beaux Arts. Entering that dark maze, he felt a chill inside. Even if this man did have Griselle's postcards, did it matter why he had them? He, Jed, had no plan for getting them back and none for what to do if this man swung around to challenge him or disappeared into a doorway, then sprang out. But the man now seemed to be homing. Jed turned cautiously into one last, dark, alley-like street in time to see ahead a large iron door swinging shut in a wall. He sprinted silently and caught it before it latched. He heard an exchange in French, one voice possibly female, then another door closing, and stood asking himself again what he thought he was doing. At the entrance to the street a dark car appeared, blocking it. Jed stepped through the doorway and saw, sitting against the building wall, a bulbous concierge, wine bottle uptilted to her mouth. It was go on or go back. Calling "troisième" in, he hoped, an assured voice, he passed before she could lower her bottle, and, as her startled, semi-focused gaze followed him, headed for the only visible door and pushed it, hoping it did not lead to broom closet or cellar.

It was heavy and weighted and he caught it and eased it shut behind him. Before the darkness had become total, he had seen that he stood in a stone stairwell without windows or light switches or fixtures. Footsteps mounted overhead. Since they continued, the brief, faint light he had let in must have gone unnoticed: Should he go farther? Perhaps a flight or two. He slipped off his shoes and immediately felt at a still further disadvantage and knew that this precaution was unnecessary on stone. However, he found himself unwilling to sit down on steps he could not see, and unable to balance on one foot in the dark. Shoes in left hand, he groped forward with his right and encountered a wooden rail-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing that did not creak but gave alarmingly. He shifted the shoes and, with his left hand, touched a dank, invisible wall. Hand trailing this and encountering textures and substances he dared not guess at, he mounted the spiraling stairs as swiftly and silently as possible.

Every other flight had a landing midway. On the others, the steps, curling round, narrowed to treacherously pointed wedges. No light or sound came from behind any door—if there were doors. The building seemed uninhabited, possibly condemned. Unless he caught up, the man above could disappear into an apartment and he, Jed, would never know which. What he was going to do when and if he did know, he had no idea. And if challenged by *anyone* on this stairway, he had no explanation. Furthermore, he could not foresee how many men might be in the apartment that was his destination, and he was, of course, unarmed, while feeling sure, without evidence, that the man climbing steadily above was. Did he plan to knock and say, "Sorry to trouble you, but I think you have some postcards of mine"?

Common sense was about to turn him around and take him quickly back down and out and away when he heard a clink of keys and, by listening for it, the clicks of a door opening and shutting above. The top floor, he felt sure, and hurried on toward it; that is, felt his way rapidly up and up to a mid-floor landing where the stairs ended abruptly against a wall. His stiffening arms kept him from bumping clangingly into what his hands told him was a bolted iron ladder. Certain that he was now alone in the stairwell, he lit his lighter. A once-black-painted, rusting, flaking ladder rose against the wall to a bolted trapdoor in the ceiling—access, probably, to an attic for making roof repairs. To his left was a knobless door. In the dark again, he felt over this door, then pushed it open and stepped inside, onto a sloping slippery surface, and felt one sock grow damp. The door sprang shut behind him. He flicked on his lighter again. He seemed to be in a large, tiled shower without faucets or shower head. The door did have an inside knob. He stepped back out and a door below opened, flooding the landing and the half flight to it in dim light. He remembered having heard of a public convenience called "Turkish" and realized that this was no place to hide. Panic said "run" without suggesting where. Voices came from below. He grabbed at and mounted the ladder, sturdier than it had looked, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

felt overhead for the trapdoor bolt, then froze. Judging by the ladder, this bolt, unpulled probably for forty years, would be rusted or painted tight or would shriek at being disturbed. But it was moving silently and smoothly and he felt oil on his hands. Equally silently and easily, he pushed up the trapdoor. Then he stepped up two rungs and caught himself as cool air hit his face and he saw, past a steeply pitched roof, a spread of night sky and other Parisian roofs.

The roof tiles looked slippery and loose. For the first time in his life he felt vertigo. He retraced his steps, lowered the trap, and slid in the bolt. Had he created a noticeable draft? Below him the stairwell swung with shadows as someone with flashlight mounted to the landing. Caught at the ladder top, fully visible to anyone who threw a light and looked up high enough, he watched the burly man he had recently been following, top and side and then back view, reach the landing and disappear into the tiled facility. Both he and his flashlight would be facing Jed when he emerged and, since that cubicle contained neither washbasins nor lights nor mirrors, Jed had only seconds to get down and away.

He let himself rapidly down the ladder, turned, and stepped lightly down the half flight. To his right, just off the stairwell, was an apartment door, ajar, and, beyond that, light but no sound. The door above opened and the flashlight again swung bannister shadows onto the walls. From far below came the sound of a new set of footsteps mounting the stairs. The possibly empty, temporarily empty apartment was the only place to go. Jed slipped in, glimpsing in the lighted room at the end of its hall a table holding a typewriter before a wall of shelves, and plunged through an open doorway to his left. The room, a small bedroom, was not unoccupied. Dim light reflected, via hall walls, from the living room, showed someone, back turned, on the bed—a girl in petticoat and bra, wrists tied behind her and to her tied ankles and both tied to the bed rail. She twisted her head around and there, above the taped mouth, were the autumn hair and sea-green eyes. Jed moved toward her but the mounting and descending men had met and were entering, talking in a language Jed did not recognize. Jed dived under the bed and, there being no hanging bedclothes, rolled to the far wall. Trousered legs passed the bedroom doorway. Through the walls came the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

screech of a stiff faucet, the sound of water running, and the faucet screech again. The reflected light brightened and Jed heard a rustle of paper, then the typewriter clacking.

He rolled out and stood up, feeling humiliated. A hero would have struck with a blunt instrument—what blunt instrument?—from behind the door—this door opened out, not in. But what mattered was that here was Griselle—somehow not on that departing train, not lost to him forever. Grab her and run. He bent to the knots, but they defied his short nails. He stripped off his jacket to cover her, but the jacket covered also the knots. When she seemed to whimper, he dropped to hold her and heard, too late, the squeak of old springs. He froze and listened. The typewriter clattered on. Rage surged at seeing Griselle like this, and without thinking how it would hurt, he stripped the tape from her mouth.

She did not cry out and the typewriter clacking continued. The typing man would be facing straight down the hall to the front door, and there were two men now, armed almost certainly. The best Jed could do would be to free Griselle and delay the men while she ran. Someone could come to check on her at any moment. He worked feverishly on the ankle knots, not thinking that without freed hands she could never make it down those dark, winding stairs and that her legs might be numb. The ankle cord was so intertwined with the wrist cord that finally he had to switch to the latter. He picked at those knots, near Griselle's lovely, longer nails that could have worked at them so much more effectively, for what seemed an eternity. Then, as the cord loosened abruptly, a knock came on the apartment door. He could only push Griselle down to her original position and himself dive under the bed again, at a complete moral and physical disadvantage if discovered.

The typewriter had stopped. Trousered legs passed. The hall door clicked open, then shut. Two more sets of legs followed the first back toward the living room. Four men, now, at least. The light brightened further. The men were talking in French and occasionally in the unidentified language. Jed crawled out and again attacked the knots, not listening but only grateful for conversation to cover any noise he could not help making.

Griselle shook and rubbed her freed hands. Jed slid her arms into his jacket sleeves, then freed her from the bed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

frame. They both worked on ankle knots. He had loosened one when a changed intonation and the scrape of chairs on a wooden floor unmistakably indicated departures. How many were going? How many staying? No way to know, and in any case someone surely would check out the bedroom. With silent apology, he took Griselle up in a fireman's lift—he had to keep one hand free—glanced toward the lighted room—the visible men stood, backs turned—and slipped to the hall and out, leaving the door ajar to supply some light.

Carefully but rapidly he felt his way down the winding stairs, ready to run, in spite of the risk of falling, at the first sound or flash of stronger light from above. His left foot slid on a worn step. He caught himself and realized that he did not have on his shoes. He had no idea where he had left them. The stairs seemed endless. Down and around. Twice, in spite of care, he scraped Griselle's bare feet against the rough wall and once, at a turn where he had to stay wide of the apexes of the wedge-shaped steps, he banged her head into it. But the whole flight down seemed uncannily soundless and there was still no sound of pursuit, although his shoes must be lying in plain view somewhere and he had not had the wits to shut the bedroom door.

"Don't let anyone," he found himself saying silently, "tell you that fleeing downstairs is easier than up. Up may take your wind, but down gets you in the knees and risks plunging you immediately to your destination." Just as his knees started to buckle, he stepped down to a step that was not down. Recovering, he felt for and found the outside door, pulled it open, and, still bearing Griselle on his shoulder, ran past the astonished-looking, drunken concierge, out through the wall door, down the street to the corner, and on and into the first lighted place—a tabac café.

"Call the police! *Gendarmes!*"

The startled proprietor reached for his bar phone, and male customers came forward and took Griselle from him. Someone slid a chair behind his knees. Then in less time than seemed possible, Griselle was lying untied and covered on a chaise in a back room and he, who had managed to get up and follow, sat beside her, one hand on her arm, a refilled cognac glass in the other. Police, in and out of uniform, filled the room. Jed, too exhausted to attempt French, gave his few facts in English, which seemed to suffice. Griselle did the same and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her facts were even fewer. As police arrived and departed, everyone asked or answered in French or English without noticing any lapse in communication. Then four men were thrust into the room—the three Jed had followed or been followed by and the flat-faced man on the train. Jed felt Griselle's arm move under his hand.

"Are these the men?" a businessman-looking detective, who had been quietly present all along, asked.

Jed said, "Yes," and Griselle nodded. The men were taken out, and the detective pulled up a chair. Speaking slowly but clearly in English, he said to Griselle:

"Do not be alarmed. You yourself are safe, and the other young lady will be taken off your boat at Southampton."

Jed interrupted. "What 'other young lady'?"

The detective turned. "Well, when you and Miss Adams feel able to again ascend those stairs, perhaps your views on things we found in that apartment will answer all our questions."

"You can't ask Miss Adams to go back to that place!"

Griselle pushed up higher on the chaise. "No, I'm all right. My legs are usable again and the hypo has worn off—the one they gave me in that cab I thought I was so lucky to get at the station this morning. I'm starving, but that can wait. I'd like to get this over with—and to know what it was all about. Why kidnap me? I have no money or family. But they had my name. There was no mistake in identity."

A woman brought in sandwiches; then a policewoman brought Griselle's dress and both their shoes. The men returned to the café proper, where Jed put on his shoes and offered to pay for the brandies and sandwiches, which offer was refused. When Griselle had dressed, they all got into police cars and returned to astonish the drinking concierge once more. Jed's knees protested but did take him back up those stairs.

For the first time, he saw the full apartment living room with its sagging couch, two easy chairs, and two straight chairs by the desk table before the wall of shelves. File cabinets stood against the right end wall. Printed cloth on a string covered the one window. The wall shelves held oversized books and magazine-like publications standing book fashion. File folders lay on the table, and clipped to the inside covers of the two open ones were photos—one a copy of Griselle's graduation picture but on flimsy paper and the other a similar

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

print of his own graduation photo. But the detective directed them to the shelves. "Perhaps you can tell us what these are?"

Jed recognized them instantly. "Yearbooks."

"American college yearbooks," Griselle added.

There were hundreds—thick, thin, hardbound, looseleaf — ranged alphabetically by state. Jed took down his and Griselle's and opened them to where their brief write-ups would be. Both biographies were circled in red and both pictures were missing—neatly slit out. The detective motioned them to sit down and pushed the open file folders before them. The top page in each seemed to contain a more extensive biography in French and, blocked out in the upper right-hand corner, a list in English of basic facts: name, description, birthdate, college, major, and profession-to-be. Then followed this identical information about each:

Parents deceased.

No siblings, siblings of parents, or other close relatives.

No permanent home.

No old or close friends.

No, or lapsed, connection with former "home town."

Career choice: government service.

Only the last lines differed. His read: "Physical type, except for height, easy to duplicate." Hers read: "Physical type unusual." But below this had been stamped:

QUALIFIED SUBSTITUTE FOUND AND TRAINED

and below that, in red:

SUBSTITUTION ARRANGED.

Early shadows had crept onto the lawn. Jed stood up as his wife called, "Well, the food's finally ready. Are you coming in or shall I bring it out?"

"Out." Jed started in to help and met her carrying the tray. Slim in slacks and sweater almost the same pale green as her eyes, her autumn hair tied back out of her way, she was still beautiful, and as she turned her head toward a calling bird, his breath caught.

"Do you still have that orange beret?"

"That—? The angora? Oh, yes. Very carefully wrapped and put away upstairs."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

UNSOLVED

by Jerome Meyer

Unsolved at present, that is, but can you work it out?

The answer will appear in the October issue.

Three cargo vessels were sunk in 1944 between forty and two hundred miles east of Boston. The three sinkings occurred exactly a month apart. The FBI caught the spy responsible, and it was later shown that the following letter, found in his pocket, had a great deal to do with his conviction. Can you connect the letter with the sinkings and give the exact location and dates of each sinking? Here is the letter:

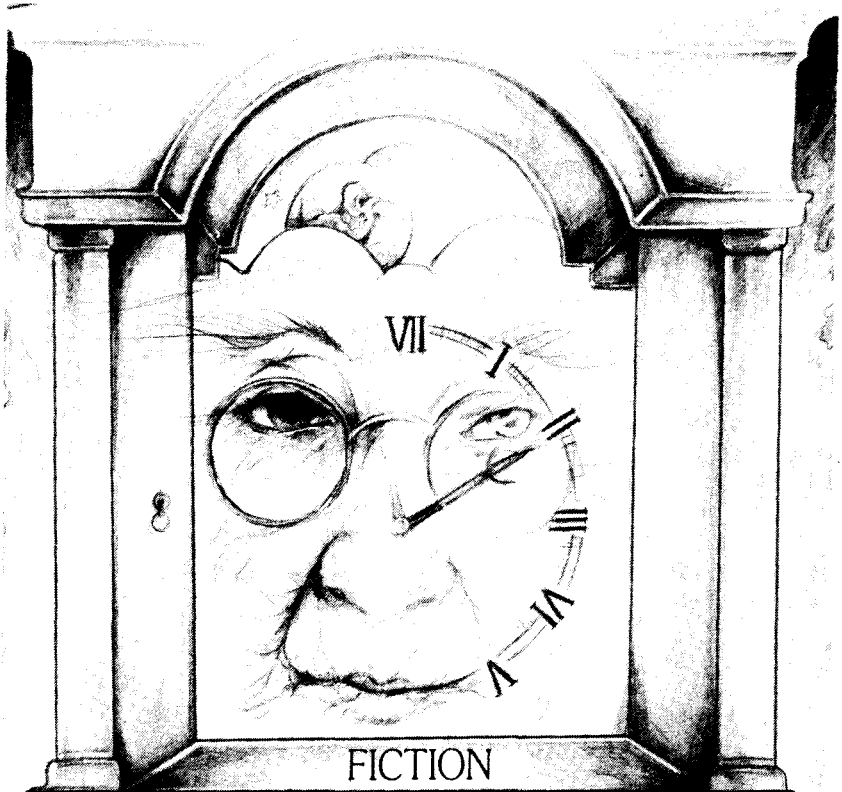
> Dear Eddie:
>
> My triplet sons are now in the navy. The first SON gets $43.00 a month and saved $65.30 already. My second son gets $41.30 a month and has saved up $67.15. My third son gets $42.00 a month and has saved $68.00. All three entered the service on their birthdays, the 24th of March. They are all nice boys and I am proud of their thrift and patriotism.
>
> Yours,
> Fred

This puzzle requires considerable ingenuity. All clues are in the letter and, knowing the facts in the case, it is up to you to interpret the letter.

See page 150 for the solution to the August puzzle.

"The FBI Goes to Work," taken from Puzzle Quiz & Stunt Fun *by Jerome Meyer. Copyright © 1948, 1956, 1972 by Dover Publications, Inc., New York, N.Y.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



FICTION

Crimes And Triumphs

by Donald Olson

They talked, there in Wingood's museum piece of a consulting room in the white frame building on Laurel Street, of the doctor's plans for retirement in Florida, Chief Ehmke expressing more envy than Wingood's half-hearted enthusiasm might have been expected to inspire. Presently, with a trace of uncertainty about venturing the observation, Ehmke said: "I suppose you know what they're saying around town. That it's no coincidence, your retiring now that Olivia Partridge is gone."

"I won't deny it was a factor," admitted Wingood, leaning back in his ancient oak swivel chair

Illustration by Perry Realo

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and fingering his pipe. "I would never have abandoned her to these young whippersnappers."

"Well, let's face it, Frank," said the police chief, less than two years from retirement himself, "all our crimes and triumphs are behind us. But tell me something. Why the dickens didn't you two ever marry? She being a widow all these years, you a bachelor."

A faintly wistful smile rearranged the deep lines on Wingood's lean, good-humored face. "Livy could never think of me as anything more than a very dear friend. She'd loved her husband that much. And Lord knows I could never have given her all he did."

"Shame, though. Two nice people like you. Well, I can see you're busy clearing out the place so I won't waste your time. Just thought you'd like to know we're not charging the niece with arson. Lord knows, she was mad enough to pull a fool stunt like that and didn't pretend to be heartbroken it happened. But there was no hard evidence. It's pretty difficult, anyway, to imagine that fat old cow toting away all the valuables from the Partridge place—especially that great big clock—and then torching it."

"And have you told Laura May?"

The chief rolled his eyes. "I told her. Said we figured it had to be burglars who set fire to the house to cover the theft."

Wingood cracked a wry smile. "I'm sure she believed you."

"Like hell she did. If she didn't do it herself, to her dying day she'll believe her sister Melva set that fire out of sheer cantankerous spite. They'll never speak to each other again. Battleaxes, both of them, but I guess it must have been quite a blow, being cheated out of their expectations, house and furnishings both. You just wonder what Olivia would have thought of all this ruckus."

"Knowing Livy, I think she'd see the funny side of it."

The chief nodded. "The lady sure did have a peculiar sense of humor, if what they're saying about her will is true." His tone implied a question mark as he studied the doctor's pondering blue eyes.

Wingood saw no reason not to satisfy the other man's curiosity. "Oh, it was true, chief, and yes, Livy did have a fine sense of irony. She knew what she was doing, all right."

"Maybe so, but like my wife says, you can't help feeling sorry for Laura May and Melva. They did their duty by their aunt. Took care of her for two years. Couldn't have been easy."

A hint of malice sparkled in Wingood's eyes. "Yes, they let

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the town know what a devoted pair they were. Saints and martyrs, the two of them."

Surprised by the doctor's tone, Chief Ehmke raised his eyebrows as he rose to leave, donning his cap. "You saying they weren't?"

For a long moment Wingood hesitated, then waved the chief back to his chair. "What would you say, chief, if I were to tell you that a far more serious crime than arson was committed at the Partridge place?"

Ehmke frowned. "Crime? Like what?"

"Murder."

Wingood smiled at the look this provoked. "Oh, don't worry. You could never charge anyone with it. You may not even believe it. But it's true, nonetheless. Olivia Partridge was murdered."

The chief eased himself back in the chair, his face solemn. "Tell me about it, doc."

"A matter of time, Dr. Wingood!" Laura May Webster had repeated on that summer afternoon some four months before her aunt died. "Seems like you've been saying that for almost two years now." The calculated sweetness of tone was not as disarming as she might have thought. She was no more capable of subtlety than her sister Melva.

With an undisguised twinkle of satisfaction Wingood agreed that he had. "Which is still all I can tell you. It's in God's hands and in Olivia's will."

"But how *long* is this to go on? I mean, it would be such a blessing if the poor dear soul could go."

A blessing to whom? Wingood thought, unsure which of the two women confronting him in the downstairs parlor he had come to detest more. He had long ago learned to despise the hypocrisy of relatives waiting for their benefactors to finish the sometimes seemingly endless process of dying. Over the past few months, Laura May's and Melva's effusions of concern and sympathy for the invalid upstairs had betrayed a growing insincerity.

"The human heart, Laura May, is not a clock. Though damaged, it may retain the will to live against all odds."

"Oh, please, don't talk to us about *clocks,* doctor," declared Melva, her younger sister, who had been busily polishing a sterling silver bride's basket, doubtless picturing how it was going to look on her own sideboard. "That's all we hear from her. Nattering on about that wretched nuisance of a grandfather clock over there. Honest to Pete, you'd think her very

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

life depended on that clock being wound. Minute the chimes start dragging she gets all in a tizzy. As if all we've got to do is wind that stupid clock."

Wingood regarded them sourly. They were both grossly overweight, and their pale, swollen faces reminded him of bread dough, Laura May's of lumpier consistency, Melva's smoother and overflowing in double chins that almost hid her neck.

"That clock," he retorted, "is Olivia's most precious possession. When she wakes in the night the chimes comfort her. And you know what she's always said, how the old clock stopped on the night her husband died."

"Fiddlesticks. Superstitious nonsense. If it stopped it was because she was too busy nursing Charlie to remember to wind it. But just let *us* forget."

Laura May, a widow, lived in a small house about a mile from Olivia's big place at Lakewood. Melva, a spinster, lived in the High Rise in downtown Mount Warren. They had taken turns looking after their aunt once her deteriorating heart confined her to her room. The question of a resident nurse had arisen at the time, but then, assuming the decline would be rapid, the two nieces had scorned the notion, declaring they wouldn't hear of poor darling Aunt Livy having to rely on the ministrations of a stranger. Why, they were all she had, poor angel, and more to the point, all she had would in time be theirs. Olivia Partridge was not rich, the capital left her by her husband all but consumed; still, she was able to maintain the fine old house and keep the treasured heirlooms that had been in her and Charlie's families for centuries.

Doctor Wingood noticed how Laura May's eyes had kept darting toward the silver basket her sister was so vigorously polishing, and finally, as if she could repress the comment no longer, she said tartly: "It would interest me to know, Melva dear, just why you're doing that. I'm sure you can't have forgotten that Aunt Livy promised me that basket."

Melva was quick to dispute this claim. "She did no such thing, and you very well know it."

"Oh yes she did. You don't believe me, then just ask her."

"If you had your way, you'd lay claim to every stick of furniture and every piece of silver in this house."

Wingood wished they would at least have the grace to defer such increasingly frequent bickerings until he had left the house, if not until Olivia was in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her grave. He knew, from what Olivia herself had told him, that they hadn't even the decency to hide their greed from her.

"They were such adorable little girls," she had recalled during one of Wingood's visits. "Looked so sweet in their white pinafores and hair ribbons when their mama would bring them to call on me . . . and now look at them. I shouldn't be unkind, but it's most distressing to lie up here and listen to them squabbling when they're both here at the same time. They don't even bother to lower their voices. Quarreling like children. About *dishes*. And silver, and pictures, and furniture. Quilts and linens. Fussing and fuming about who's to have this and who's to have that."

"Disgusting," Wingood had said with feeling. "You should have hired a companion, Livy."

"Too late now. It doesn't really matter any more. But the clock, Frank. If only they would remember to wind the clock. I lie here and listen for the chimes . . . and I remember, oh so many things. Pleasant things. As if they were all stored up in that clock. And in the night I wake up and hear the quarter hour strike and I play a little guessing game. Is it two fifteen? Four fifteen? But when I hear the chimes ring so slowly, with that awful dying sound, I get the most dreadful feeling. I can't get back to sleep then, and I want to drag myself out of this bed and—and *rescue* the poor old thing." She uttered a melancholy sigh of self-reproach. "Silly, isn't it? See how the mind grasps at the most trivial diversions? It's as if, when I hear the chimes ring out with a strong, confident sort of energy, there may still be hope for *me*. No, don't laugh, Frank, and don't pity me. Of course I know there's no hope. It's not that exactly . . ."

He felt that he understood her meaning, a meaning he knew the two sisters, consumed by their mounting greed and frustration, were much too dense to comprehend.

"Why on earth does she *cling* to life, will you please tell me," Laura May would remark in her blunt and tactless way. "She has nothing to live *for*. Just lying there, wasting away, suffering."

"She's not in pain," Wingood would try to explain. "Except for the difficulty in breathing. And you're quite wrong, Laura May. She does have something to live for. Life itself. Her memories and the sight of the sun pouring into her room. The singing of the birds in the apple trees. The sound of that tractor plowing the meadow over there.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The flowers in her room. Moonlight. The blue sky. Her books. You call that nothing?"

Laura May sniffed. "Now you sound just like her."

"Maybe so, but it can't hurt you girls to keep the clock wound. It frightens her when she thinks it might be going to stop. It has a very important psychological effect. You don't want to cause her unnecessary distress, do you? It only makes her condition worse when she gets upset. It may seem a trivial matter to you, but I assure you it isn't."

Laura May shot a malignant glance toward the beautiful tall case clock at the foot of the stairs, as if blaming it for this rebuke. "What's the good of a clock if it can't even tell the right time? Neither Melva nor I want the old thing. . . . Of course I'm sure some antique dealer will pay a pretty penny for it. When the time comes."

The doctor had no wish to embroil himself in the sisters' squabbles, but this opening was too good to pass up. "That's another thing. Don't you think it's a little premature to start bickering about how your aunt's things are to be divided? She hears you arguing, you know. And that upsets her."

Laura May's tone grew even more deeply aggrieved. "Nonsense. She can't hear what we talk about. Besides, things ought to be settled in advance. Melva's got it in her head she can just pick and choose, pick and choose."

"Then may I suggest you both pick and choose *after* Olivia's gone."

Laura May bridled. "With all due respect, doctor, I believe it's *our* business what we talk about."

"And it's my business to make sure my patient remains as tranquil as possible. Good day, Laura May."

In August a prolonged spell of hot and humid weather aggravated Olivia's respiratory discomfort, but when the weather broke and fall crept in, the invalid rallied. Laura May and Melva, having anticipated the final crisis, betrayed their disappointment even more openly, until one afternoon when the doctor called he found to his surprise that both sisters were in attendance and their greeting unexpectedly cordial. When he came downstairs, Melva invited him to have a cup of tea with them.

"Yes," he agreed in response to Laura May's inquiry, "the immediate crisis seems to have passed."

Laura May's smile expanded. "Bless the poor dear. What amazing willpower. And her such a frail bit of a thing."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Melva poured the tea and handed a cup to Wingood. "You refer, of course, to the physical crisis, doctor." She exchanged a quick, somewhat furtive glance with her sister. "We wanted to ask you, though. If you've noticed these little signs of—well, of a weakening upstairs, so to speak."

Melva tittered nervously as Wingood glanced inquisitively toward the staircase. "I *mean*, doctor, her mind."

Wingood frowned. "Her mind? Good Lord, woman, there's not a blessed thing wrong with Olivia's mind. It's as sharp as it ever was."

"Well, of course you only see her now and then, and so briefly. But you know yourself how she carries on about that clock."

"It keeps getting worse," piped up Melva. "Quite irrational."

"An obsession," whispered Laura May, as if the word implied all the horrors of lunacy.

Wingood glanced at his watch. "Time can be very important to all of us. In fact, I'm late for my calls—"

"We won't keep you, doctor," promised Melva. "But you said it yourself. As if she's taken it into her head that the clock is what's keeping her alive. As if it's one of those machines like they have in hospitals that keep people alive when they'd be better off dead."

Laura May hastily intervened, as if Melva were not to be trusted to steer the talk in the right direction. "We've talked it over, doctor. It's clear to us the situation can drag on indefinitely. All winter."

Wingood disagreed. "I fear that's unlikely."

"Well, we've been wrong before, haven't we? Now, my sister and I are prepared to do our duty by poor Aunt Livy for as long as necessary. But we do have our lives to get on with. It's not that we begrudge for a minute the time we devote to the poor angel—"

"We know where our Christian duty lies," declared Melva piously. "But we wonder if the time hasn't come to make other arrangements."

"Have you discussed this with your aunt?" asked Wingood.

"No. Well, not in so many words."

The doctor tried to conceal his pleasure. "Frankly, I agree with you. I've thought from the first a nurse-companion would be more practical in every way."

This time the sisters exchanged wary looks. Laura May fiddled with her teacup. "A nurse was not exactly what we had in mind, doctor. Now, we've talked with Henry Crandall—Aunt Livy's lawyer, you know—and we explained the situation. We think Aunt Livy would be bet-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ter off in a home—a nursing home—and we could be appointed power of attorney. As long as you were willing, as the family doctor, to sign a paper declaring Aunt Livy incompetent—"

"In*compe*tent?" Wingood sprang to his feet. "My dear woman, Olivia Partridge is less incompetent than anyone in this room. The idea's outrageous. I can't believe you're serious."

Laura May's jaw clamped shut, then flew open. "We're entirely serious. And if you won't do it, there are more reasonable doctors who will. Doctors who haven't been sweet on Aunt Livy for years."

"No doctor in *his* right mind would ever declare Olivia incompetent. Not while I'm around to have a say in it."

The sisters trailed him to the door, where Laura May said hotly: "I suppose you can't wait to tell Aunt Livy about this."

"I wouldn't dream of causing her that kind of distress. And I'd firmly advise you not to do so, either."

Nevertheless, he suspected from the look on Olivia's face when he called a few days later that something had disturbed her. Her dark-circled eyes gazed up at him from the pillow as he put his stethoscope away. "Tell me the truth, Frank. Do you think I'm getting—peculiar?"

"Good Lord, what a question. *You?*"

"*They* think I am."

His lips tightened. "What have they said to you?"

"Oh, they haven't actually *said* anything. Just dropped little hints. They're getting tired of waiting, you know. I should have died months ago."

He perched on the side of the bed and reached for her hand. "Send them packing, Livy. We can find you a proper nurse. I won't have them upsetting you."

She dismissed the suggestion with a slight movement of her head on the pillow. "They're my sister's children, Frank. It can't be so very long now. But please tell me the truth. Your professional opinion. *Am* I of sound mind? In the legal sense?"

"In any and all senses." Her question, phrased as it was, prepared him for some even more extraordinary remark, that and the subtly provocative smile that formed upon her drawn features.

"Then I want you to do me a favor, Frank. Henry Crandall. My lawyer. Bring him with you to see me, please. It's about my will. I'll need you as a witness."

He felt a tiny thrill of malicious enjoyment. "You're going to change your will? Bravo!"

"Not change it exactly. Amend it. It's probably very wicked of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

me, but I've made a decision."

Whatever he might have suspected lay behind her request, her purpose in consulting the lawyer would never have entered his mind. Wingood was sure Crandall was even more surprised.

Olivia studied the man's face. "I know. It sounds—bizarre. But it is legally enforceable, isn't it?"

Crandall glanced at the doctor. "Oh, entirely legal. The doctor here has assured me that by every medical standard you're of sound mind and aware precisely of what you're doing. That's good enough for me."

Laura May had evidently summoned her sister hastily to the house while the two men were upstairs. Their faces betrayed identical expressions of tremulous suspicion, and as soon as the lawyer departed, they pounced on Wingood, who dismissed their inquisitive thrusts with an airy lightness.

"Nothing to be alarmed about, ladies. Olivia merely wanted to be sure her affairs were in order."

They plainly distrusted, if not his words, the merry glint in his eyes. Laura May said, "Don't be coy with us, doctor. We've a right to know. Was it anything to do with her will?"

Wingood politely brushed past them, then turned at the door. "Don't fret, ladies. You'll get what's coming to you. In my opinion, more than you deserve."

Three days later, at shortly after two in the morning, Dr. Wingood's phone rang beside his bed.

"Please come at once, doctor," wailed Laura May. "It's Aunt Livy. I'm afraid she's dead."

He arrived at the house at Lakewood to find all the lights blazing and Laura May and Melva blubbering in the parlor. At the foot of the stairs, her hand outstretched toward the panelled walnut base of the grandfather clock, Olivia Partridge lay dead.

"What happened?" Wingood demanded.

"Horrible, doctor," moaned Laura May. "It was just so frightful. She'd had a bad day. Such trouble breathing, you know. But no worse, really," she quickly added, "than other spells. I thought it best to wait until morning to call you. Then tonight she rang her little bell. I was dozing here on the sofa. I went up to her, and she started in about the clock. I knew it needed winding, but I hadn't been able to find the key when I got here to relieve Melva this evening."

Melva recovered herself sufficiently to deny any negligence on her part. "Don't look at me!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It was right there on the shelf the last time I used it."

"I tried to tell her," sobbed Laura May. "But she wouldn't listen. She was almost frantic. I said I'd try to find it, and I looked high and low. I thought maybe it could have got swept onto the floor when one of us was dusting and been picked up in the vacuum cleaner. I even emptied the bag. I was almost frantic myself. I simply could not find it. So I warmed some milk and took it up to her and gave her one of her pills and I tried my darnedest to make her understand about the key. She—she spoke very rudely to me. Yes. She called me a devil. Made me feel real bad, she did."

The doctor lifted his eyes to the clock. The pendulum hung motionless. "You still haven't found the key?"

They shook their heads in unison, then burst into an even louder duet of sobs.

Chief Ehmke listened to the doctor's story and when it was finished said: "The key was never found?"

"No. I bought a new one at the Watch Shop before the—before the vigil, shall we say?"

"And you think one of them deliberately hid it as an excuse not to wind the clock?"

Wingood looked grim. "I know it for a fact. I knew it not at the time, but a few days later. They wanted to punish her, you see, for refusing to tell them why she had brought the lawyer there. They deliberately let the clock run down until it stopped. The effort to reach it was too much for Olivia."

The chief was a practical-minded man. Wingood detected a note of embarrassed scepticism in Ehmke's voice. "And that's what you meant by murder?"

"Chief, you'd have to understand the almost mystical significance that old clock held for Olivia. Laura May and Melva pooh-poohed the notion, but they were well aware of it themselves. They had to be. Melva herself likened it to the importance of a life-sustaining machine to a critically ill patient. Oh, they knew."

Wingood was rather sorry now that he had decided to mention the incident to the chief. "As I say, it wasn't the sort of murder you could charge them with. But murder is what it was."

"Still, they were wrong in their suspicions. She hadn't changed her will."

"Oh, the rumors you've heard were close to the truth. You should have seen their two faces when the will was read. When

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they learned that only one of them was to inherit Olivia's treasures. And that the clock would decide which. There's irony for you, chief. Only Olivia could have thought of it. It was her way of punishing them for the negligence about the clock and for their greedy squabbling. As well as her way of settling in advance what she knew would be an endless feud over the division of the spoils."

Wingood's look of amusement deepened the frown of perplexity on the chief's broad forehead. "Now let me get this straight, doc. According to the will, the two sisters had to guess at precisely what time the clock would stop once it had been wound up. Each wrote her estimate on a slip of paper, to be held by the lawyer. And then the two women had to sit there in that house and wait for the clock to stop."

"That's it. And I was the monitor. And don't think I didn't relish the duty. If either of them had paid the slightest attention they'd have known the clock had a twenty-four hour movement. Not that it would stop in precisely one day. The suspense was almost more than they could bear. You can imagine what abuse they would have heaped on poor Livy's memory if I hadn't been right there in the room. The sensible thing, of course, would have been for them to agree to sell everything and share the proceeds, but their greed infected them with a gambling fever. Each wanted it all. Only then they made a bad slip. I'd left the room for a few minutes, and they were jawing at each other so loud they didn't hear me open the door when I came back. I heard Laura May say, 'I hope you're satisfied now, you and your bright ideas.' And Melva said, 'It may have been my idea, but you're the one who hid it.' And then I knew the truth, you see."

The chief grinned. "And Melva won the jackpot."

"Yes, Melva's estimate was pretty wide of the mark, but it came closer. *Then* don't think the fur didn't begin to fly. If I hadn't been there, I think Laura May would have gone berserk. Screaming and hollering, swearing she'd contest the will in every court in the land. Raging on about the whims of a lunatic."

"So could she have had the will overturned?"

"She could have tried. They might have been wrangling over it for years. Who knows?"

Ehmke stroked his chin and looked thoughtful. "I see your point in all this, sure. But murder, doc, that's a strong word."

"To hasten someone's death by intentionally aggravating

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

her condition? No, I don't find it too strong a word at all."

"Well, I sort of wish you'd told me the whole story before now. It sure gave Laura May Webster a strong motive for burning the Partridge place. Spite can drive a person to do some pretty crazy things. It must have galled her no end to see her sister win the lot."

Wingood shook his head. "True. But as you said, you found no evidence that Laura May did it. And I have to agree it would have been all but physically impossible for her to have removed that clock from the house."

The chief rose. "Well, it's something they'll have to live with the rest of their lives."

Once he had gone, Dr. Wingood remained in his office for another half hour before locking the door and driving his station wagon the seven blocks to his bungalow. The silence of the place enveloped him as he turned the key and stepped inside. He had relinquished the services of Mrs. Weatherly, his housekeeper, the day of Olivia's funeral, when he had decided at last to retire and move south.

He prepared his solitary meal and carried it into the dining room. Before sitting down to eat he went into the living room and took from a desk drawer a framed picture of Olivia Partridge as a young woman. He returned to the dining room and placed the picture, facing him, on the other side of the table. Then he lit the candles as one might light votive candles before the image of a beloved saint.

As he began to eat, his eyes settled upon the flickering yellow candle flames. He remembered the precise moment when that extraordinarily reckless and uncharacteristically lawless impulse had seized upon him. In the smile that greeted the thought shone not the faintest trace of shame or regret or guilt.

Presently, lifting his head and half turning it toward the staircase behind him, he listened to the chiming of the clock in the room above. He looked again at the picture across from him and imagined upon Livy Partridge's face a ghostly smile of approval. And forgiveness.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FICTION

ALONE AT SEA

by W. Glenn Duncan

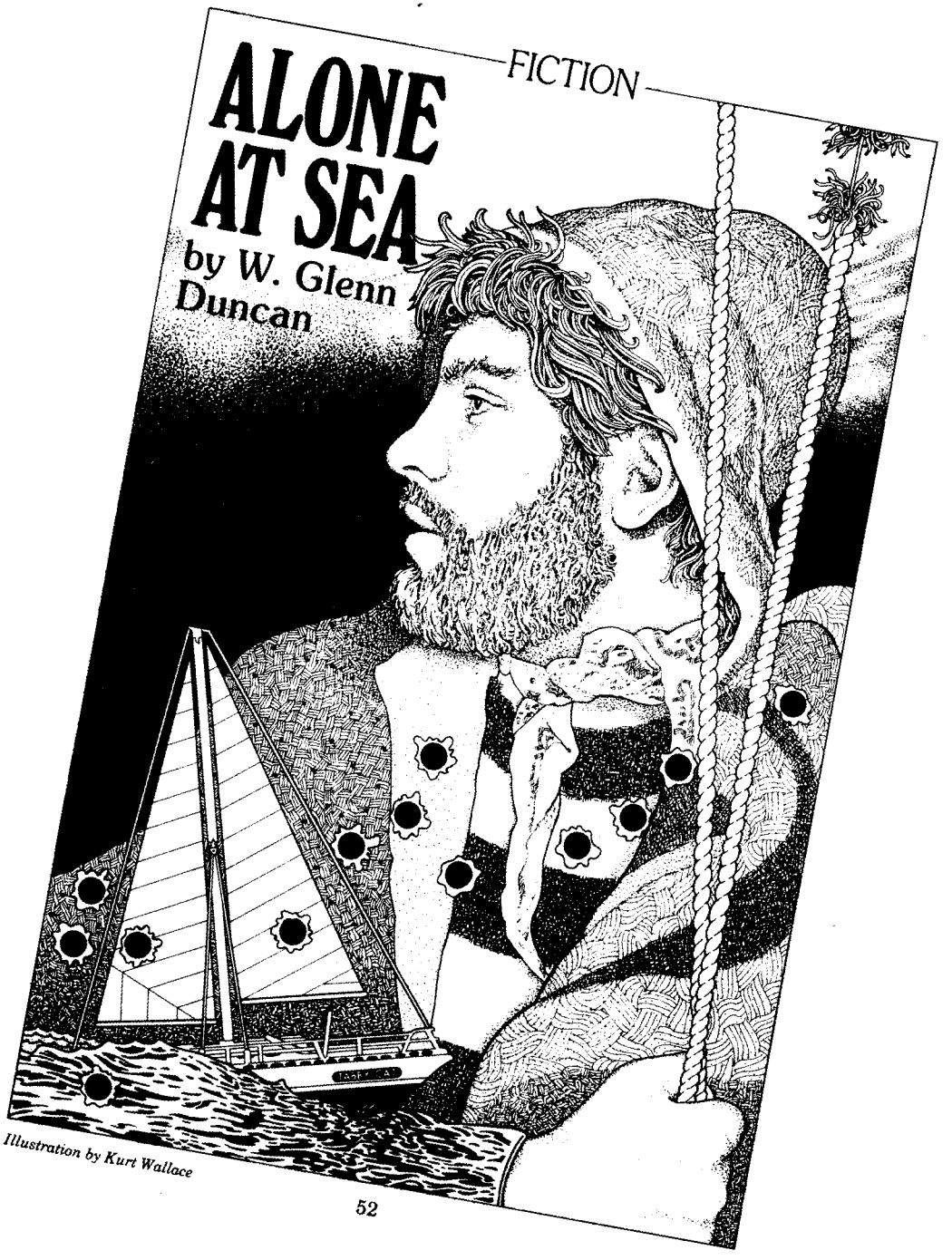


Illustration by Kurt Wallace

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

After *Tabby Cat* went down, I sat in the raft for a long while, jerking and swaying to the irregular motion, not thinking too clearly. The finality of abandoning ship numbed me. One moment, *Tabby Cat* had been speeding along, her twin hulls scratching foamy wakes across the sea, and the next moment, it seemed, she was only a masthead and whip antenna slipping beneath the surface.

I knew pretty well where I was. I had been holding a course of 068° and hilltops were visible, though the shoreline had dropped below the horizon. Say, ten miles offshore and maybe fifteen miles northeast of Sydney. Well into the East Australian current, probably, which meant the little Avon inflatable liferaft and I would drift south along the coast at anything from one to four knots.

The breeze was fresh and the sun was warm, almost hot, through my T-shirt. A wordy epitaph flashed through my mind! IT WAS A NICE DAY WHEN MATT HENDON'S BOAT HIT A WHALE AND SANK. Well, it almost *had* to be a nice day, didn't it, because I never sailed alone unless the weather was good.

It came to me that thinking about epitaphs was not the best mental attitude for my situation.

I scanned the horizon. There were no ships in sight. And why would there be? No one sinks near another ship. It's a law of nature, like bread falling on the floor butter side down. I might not see a ship for hours, perhaps days.

Knock it off, Hendon! This is a survival situation. Get your act together.

Okay. Stock-taking time, then. I piled my meager possessions in one corner of the raft and went through them carefully. One plastic water jug, almost full. Call it a gallon of drinking water. The screwtop container of nibbling food for night watches. Contents: two packages of dried fruit, half a bag of pretzels, three sticks of chewing gum, a candy bar, and two tubes of processed cheese.

Next, the small panic kit stowed in the raft for such emergencies. Inside, I found a bailer, patch kit, sun cream, whistle, signal mirror, flares, fish hooks with lines and—what happened to the medical kit? Then I remembered the time I had used it to dig a fish hook out of Doug's thumb. And I had not put the kit back. Damn!

All right, I thought. It's all right. You're not hurt, so you don't need it. Water is the most important thing, and you have enough of that.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Now, what else? Ah, rigging knife in the jeans pocket. Handkerchief. Boatshoes, with shoelaces suitable for . . . well, they're here if I need them. And a baseball cap.

And a watch that read three thirty on a Monday afternoon.

The horizon remained empty except for hazy hilltops in the west. It was difficult to get comfortable in the tiny raft. A few inches of water sloshed in the bottom, and I couldn't stretch my legs out far enough. They ought to make these things bigger, I thought, which made me remember *Tabby Cat* and the first time I saw her.

I had been looking for a sailing boat for two months when I found *Tabby*. She was a catamaran, designed in England and constructed in New Zealand of timber and Dynel sheathing. Thirty-four feet long with a fifteen foot beam, she had more room inside than a fifty foot monohull. Five bunks, plus a chart table and a large galley in the starboard hull.

She was moored in the Brisbane river and from the first, she looked just right. Oh, sure, she was a little used. She was fifteen years old, after all, and amateur-built. But she seemed solid, so I gave the broker a deposit and signed the contract, subject to a marine survey.

The survey came out about like I expected. "Roughly built," it said, "well maintained and seaworthy." I smiled at my banker and he lent me the rest of the money, though he wanted a lien on the inventory at the Mortimer Street store and I resented his attitude a little bit.

Al Danziger advised against buying a boat. He said I should use that credit line to modernize the original shop, but when I pointed out that his job was to keep the books, not make business decisions, he shut up.

Hang on, Hendon, you're supposed to be looking for ships, not wool-gathering. Scan the horizon. Empty. The loneliness of my predicament struck me. The east coast of Australia was only ten miles away, but it might as well have been a hundred. Or five hundred. The raft had no sail and paddling was futile. The round, flat raft just wobbled in circles. No, the only thing moving me across the face of the earth was the current. And currents don't flow toward the shore.

I felt pretty low then and I realized Al Danziger would have done me a big favor if he'd talked me out of buying *Tabby Cat*.

Ray Johannson went to Brisbane with me to pick up *Tabby* and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sail her down to Sydney. That's when I found out what I really had. First, we had to make her ready for sea. Among other things, we replaced two halyards. Two dollars and ninety cents a meter for pre-stretched, braided dacron and it took fifty-three meters. Then there weren't enough blocks to set the staysail and the jib at the same time. Somehow I'd missed that little problem during my inspection.

We fabricated safety lines, stitched up harnesses, bought a dan buoy—one hundred forty-seven dollars and fifty cents, including strobe light—and hauled the VHF transceiver to the shop after a power transistor blew during my first test call. I bought an RDF to navigate, using the coastal radio beacons. Five hundred eleven dollars and forty-five cents.

Then, after we had worked like dogs for a week, we cleared the south passage at Moreton Island and knocked a hole in the bridge deck three hours later.

It was a tricky bit of night navigation to work our way into a sheltered anchorage without hitting Flat Rock, but we made it. The next morning, when we could examine the damage closely, we discovered the original builder had used yellow brass screws in a high stress area. Those bloody screws were fifteen years old, and the zinc had leached out of them till they were weak as matchsticks. It was no wonder the first rough sea had slapped a ply panel loose.

Cursing, Ray and I patched up *Tabby Cat* and completed the voyage to Sydney. The morning we arrived home, I phoned Brisbane to scream at the broker about the lousy survey. He sniffed and didn't want to talk about it. Read the survey closely, he said. I did, and found a paragraph at the bottom that said the surveyor did his best but he didn't guarantee anything, so tough luck, chump. After a few more calls, I learned the surveyor was the broker's brother-in-law. So what can you do?

I beached *Tabby* and strengthened the weak area. I sailed her and enjoyed the sailing, but I didn't trust the boat after that. I kept expecting things to go wrong and they did.

The outboard auxiliary sucked up a floating plastic bag that blocked off the cooling water inlet. The motor overheated and jammed solid. Three eighty-eight fifty-six for parts and labor. Then I scared myself one night in a sudden gale and decided to install proper reefing gear. At the chandlery, they smiled when I walked out carrying three hundred bucks worth of blocks, lines, fairleads,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

jammers, and the like. And wouldn't you know it, the first time I used the new gear, a line jammed and while the sail was half-reefed, half-set, a gust popped open six feet of seam.

It went on and on. Somebody stole the dinghy and the insurance didn't cover it. The claims assessor said because the dinghy was not onboard *Tabby* at the time of theft, it wasn't insured. So buy your own new dinghy, pal, and while you have your checkbook out, your $264.87 quarterly premium is due next Wednesday.

While all this was happening, I was shelling out ninety-two fifty a month for a marina slip plus all the little things that constantly need replacement or repair on any boat. A bit of paint here, a new fitting there, more fenders because the turkey berthed next to me couldn't keep his mooring lines tight enough and—well, you get the idea.

And, I realized one day, I was dogging it at the office. Being the boss made it too easy for me to slip away, and I missed things. It took me a long time to realize that. I ignored Danziger's coughs and eye-rolling, and even when Milly made a crack about absentee ownership, I laughed it off. But I couldn't ignore it when Al brought me the figures for the Mortimer Street store ten days after the manager suddenly resigned and left town. The store was down a shade better than eleven grand worth of inventory.

It was my fault. Before the boat, I used to drop in unannounced. If I had still done so, I might have caught that thieving Angelo selling my stock out the back door. But I didn't drop in. Because I was too busy playing with the boat.

Tabby Cat was a mixed blessing around home, too. Jilly—she's eight—thought *Tabby* was wonderful. She liked to sit on the trampoline between the bows and watch the waves rush underneath her. I think the day the dolphins swam alongside was the best for Jilly. She was still smiling when she fell asleep that night.

And Doug, oh, Doug became quite a sailor. He was thirteen and big like me so he didn't have much trouble handling the boat once I'd shown him how. He picked it up quickly, too. One day, I chucked the dan buoy overboard and told Doug that buoy was me, over the side, and he had to get back to pick me up all by himself. Then I folded my arms and watched. He worked hard, that kid, and he laid old *Tabby* right alongside the dan buoy as sweet as you please. Then he turned to me with a big happy "I did it" grin smeared across his broad face. A terrific kid. I was really proud of him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Barb. Well, the boat wasn't much of a success with Barb. She tried to like it, even staged a little ceremony and donated pots and pans and dishes for the galley. And she went sailing half a dozen times. But it didn't take for Barb. Finally, she started having other things to do when we planned a sailing day. Barb hadn't been on *Tabby* for a couple of months before—

I came out of my daydream with a start, realizing I had not checked the horizon for a long time.

Nothing. I became angry. How could I be only ten miles from shore, near a busy port like Sydney, and not see any ships? I felt sorry for myself and irrationally wished a whale left enough time for a radio call before it battered a boat to pieces. I took a drink of water, then poured a little over my head to cool off before I realized I was wasting fresh water. Three quarts remaining.

The shock of what I had done forced me to calm down. I looked at my watch. Six o'clock. The sun sagged toward the horizon. I realized then I would be in the raft all night. I did not feel very confident of being rescued.

I had not planned to spend a night in the raft when I decided to sink *Tabby Cat.*

The decision came about this way. I was disillusioned after all the problems with the boat. Al Danziger had almost talked me into selling her. Then I found the first teredo worm.

Teredo worms are sneaky little sea worms that eat wooden boats. Literally. One small chip below the waterline and in they go. They leave a tiny hole on the way in, and once safely in the wood, they act like termites. A solid looking plank can be riddled with worm tunnels and weak as balsa.

The worms settled it. *Tabby* was worthless. Any survey—even one as crummy as the Brisbane con trick—would find the worms. No buyer would look twice at the boat.

My insurance policy would not cover worm infestation, but I thought about the dinghy episode and decided to get the money out of the insurance company anyway.

But how? A ballasted monohull is easy to sink: open a seacock or two, in comes the water and the lead keel pulls her down. Unballasted multihulls like *Tabby Cat* are quite different. There was only one way to explain the amount of damage required to sink *Tabby*. A whale attack.

It's happened before. Half a dozen times I know of and probably

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a lot more. A racing trimaran disappeared off the southeast coast in the sixties. A whale got blamed for that one. An English couple—the Baileys—spent a hundred and seventeen days in a raft after a whale bashed in their yacht north of the Galapagos Islands. The Baileys' whale had apparently run amok after being wounded by a nearby whaling vessel, but the mythical whale I dreamed up would be sleeping on the surface. *Tabby Cat* would run into it. Surprise, surprise! The startled whale would lash out with its flukes, and *Tabby* would sink while intrepid Matt Hendon took to his liferaft.

With provisions and in the middle of a well travelled area, of course.

That was the plan, and as the little raft rocked and slopped through the long night, I dozed and dreamed and remembered how the plan had been carried out.

I had intended *Tabby's* final voyage to be a poignant, gentle sail out to her intended gravesite; a farewell visit with an incurably ill friend. But it didn't turn out that way.

When I went to the marina, I carried an old seabag containing a water jug and my old pump shotgun. The twelve gauge seemed the quickest way to open up several holes in the hulls, though I felt a little squeamish about shooting holes in my boat.

The first thing I noticed when I stepped aboard was the undogged forepeak hatch on the starboard hull. The padlock was gone, and the hatch was not properly seated on its coaming. That was the final straw. The marina had been plagued with boat break-ins in recent months, and now the scum had burgled *my* boat. Suddenly I didn't want a calm goodbye sail. I only wanted to be rid of *Tabby* as soon as possible.

Angrily, I slammed the hatch in place and dogged it down tight to keep her from taking in water and sinking within sight of shore. Except for that, my usual unhurried sailing preparations were forgotten. The hell with seamanship. I cast off and motored out of the marina while I dragged the genoa sail bag out of the cockpit locker.

Danny Gallagher was working on board *Iruka*, berthed at the end of the finger pier, and he called out something as I passed him. I forced a smile and big hearty wave. Hi, Danny, I thought bitterly. Did they hit you, too? Well, too damn bad, pal. I don't know or care what you do, but I'm getting out of the boat business my own way.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I couldn't think of anything except getting out to sea and dumping *Tabby Cat.* I kept the little outboard auxiliary screaming at full revs all the way. Usually, I hated the noise, but right then it seemed better than time-wasting tacks out of the harbor. I did other unseamanlike things, too, like leaving the mooring lines in a tangle on the deck instead of coiling them neatly and stowing them. I stayed in the cockpit, unwilling to unlock the main hatch and face the ransacked cabin. At that point, I didn't care what the thieves got away with. I had a date with an invisible whale, and I didn't want to be late.

Thirty minutes after leaving the slip, *Tabby Cat* cleared the heads and lifted to the ocean swell. I hoisted the mainsail and the big genoa, strangled the rackety motor, and winched the sheets in tight, forcing *Tabby* onto a close-hauled beat to windward. She was over-canvassed and the ride was rough as we raced up and down over the swells. Every few seconds, *Tabby* boomed and shuddered as the flat bridge deck between the twin hulls bottomed on a wave crest. Normally, I didn't press her on that point of sail. It was too noisy and too violent, too stressful to her structure. But *Tabby* had let me down too many times to be coddled on her last trip.

So I sailed *Tabby Cat* out to the edge of the Tasman Sea and I killed her there. I think I cried while I did it. At least, my recollection is hazy and indistinct. I remember firing the shotgun into the bottom of each cockpit locker. I remember how the splintered wood scraped on the gun barrel as I poked the muzzle through the holes and put three more blasts through the bottom of each hull.

Even though I was sick of the boat and wanted to be rid of her, it hurt me to sink her. When a pet dog or cat has been mortally injured by a car, you finish them off to spare them the suffering. You do it, but it is very hard to watch its face while you pull the trigger. Killing *Tabby* was like that.

I must have unlashed the liferaft from its deck cradle, inflated it, and put the food and water into it, but I don't remember doing so. The next thing I recall was being in the raft, watching *Tabby* disappear.

Hours later, a wave slopped salt water into the raft and woke me from an uncomfortable doze. It was nearly dawn. A new day and obviously a better one, because the bulky silhouette of a freighter stood high on the gray horizon.

The first red flare worked—sometimes they don't—and the watch

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

officer on the four to eight must have been looking in my direction when I fired it. The freighter's bow wave changed a moment later and she altered shape, growing shorter and taller as she steamed toward me.

The freighter was bound for Sydney. Maybe, I thought, my nautical luck is finally changing. I told—and sold—the whale story to the ship's officers and earned low whistles and slow headshakes for my performance. The chief engineer, incredibly, helped me out when he insisted he had seen a pod of whales in the same spot on his last trip two weeks earlier.

"Well, there you are," I said, grinning like a fool.

They radioed Sydney about me and I asked them to get a message to Barb. I didn't want her to worry.

The crew and I were cheerful as we docked. They smiled with the quiet pride of professional seamen who have saved another from the deep. I felt smug. I had gotten rid of *Tabby Cat* and, with the engineer's story as a backup, I expected no trouble from the Maritime Mutual Insurance Company.

Barb met the freighter, and she swarmed up the gangplank as soon as it reached the dock. She held Jilly by the hand. I reached out for them, but Barb gave me an odd look and I realized something was wrong, badly wrong.

"Where's Doug?" we asked each other.

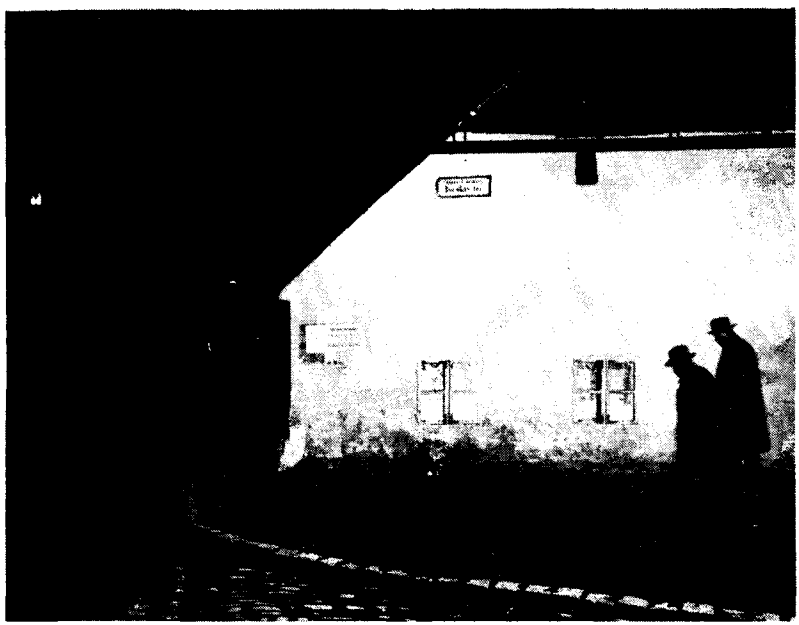
"Where is Doug?" she repeated. "Matt, Doug wanted to surprise you by playing stowaway. He took the spare key. He said he was going to hide in the forepeak."

Barb's eyes went wide and wild. Dimly, I realized she was clawing at my shirt. Her fingernails hurt as they raked my chest and my ears roared with a buzzing sound that almost, but not quite, drowned out my wife as she screamed over and over, "Where's Doug? *Where is Doug?"*

Important Notice to Subscribers: All subscription orders and mail regarding subscriptions should be sent to P.O. Box 1932, Marion, O. 43305. For change of address, please advise 6 to 8 weeks before moving. Send us your current mailing label with new address.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE MYSTERIOUS PHOTOGRAPH

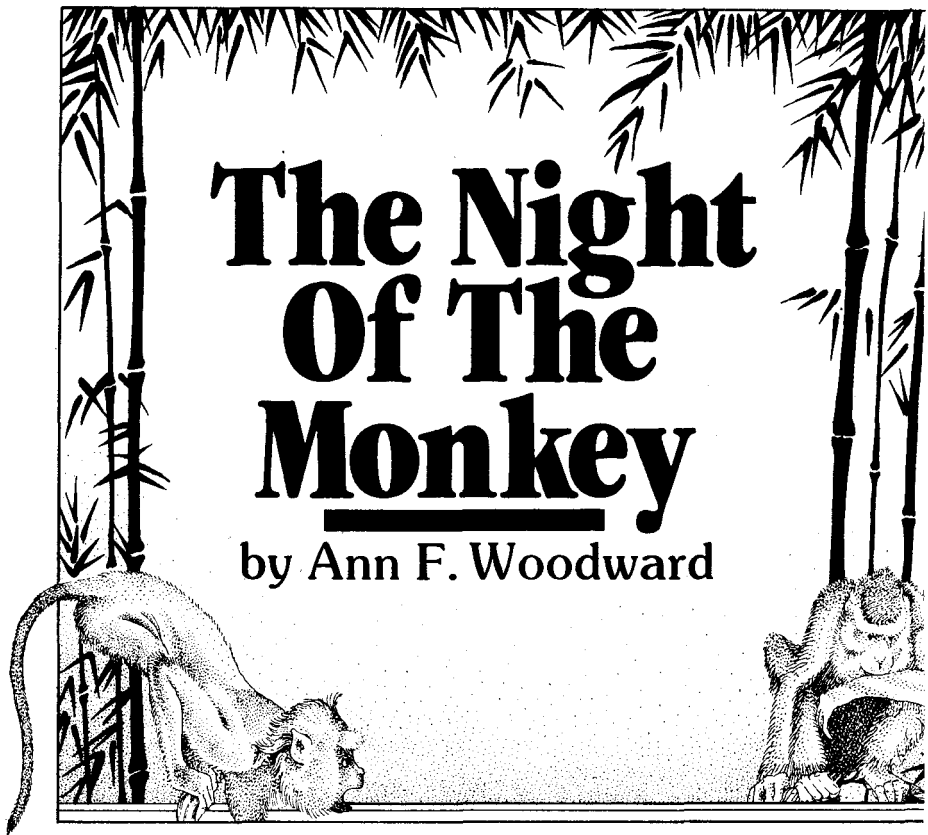


Andre Kertesz

Abroad in a dark night, on a dark errand . . . We will give a prize of $25 to the person who invents the best mystery story (in 250 words or less), based on the above photograph. The story will be printed in a future issue. Reply to Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine, 380 Lexington Avenue, New York, New York 10017.

The winning entry for the April Mysterious Photograph will be found on page 83.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The Night Of The Monkey

by Ann F. Woodward

"Because it will be the Night of the Monkey," said the princess, "I will ask you to stay with me tonight and keep me company. Since it is best not to sleep, we will entertain each other and pass the time together."

The Lady Aoi looked through the gloom of the princess' room at the several women gathered there. It was a day of clouds and spring rain at the end of the Second Month and all the shutters were closed and rattling in the wind. Muted in the dim light, the colors of silk robes gleamed as though through water, willow and lavender and cherry pink, violet and rose shimmering together, cut by shafts of liquid color as the lift of a sleeve or fold of a hem returned the light. Each robe shifted now, as they all faced their mistress, agreeing that company would relieve the te-

Illustration by Glenn Wolff

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



dium of their vigil. For on the Night of the Monkey, mischievous spirits were particularly strong and would invade the unwary, to plant the seeds of death.

The princess was staying with her ladies at the house of her father, the Great Minister of the Right. Visits to this comfortable mansion always pleased Aoi. She welcomed the change from the endless activity at court and she liked to see the princess lose her air of stern propriety and soften her posture, as she did when at home.

By evening the wind had stopped and in the stillness the rain kept on, hardly evident except for occasional rivulets along the eaves or the falling of a large drop from an overburdened leaf. The fresh, soft air was so mild that the upper half of the shutters could be raised. Aoi went with Lady Sei to the princess' rooms.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tall lanterns had been brought from all over the house, and the light was bright enough to illuminate a branch of pine outside that extended near the door to the garden. By the time they arrived, the princess had begun a game of Go with Lady Tayu and the rest were taking turns reading an old romance, the scroll laid out on the floor, partially unrolled and turned this way and that to face the present reader. Aoi saw that a koto had been placed near the door and she knew that it was meant for Lady Sei, who was a particularly talented player. She felt a small relaxation in her shoulders. Music would be a good thing tonight, most of all for the musician.

Lady Sei had been only a short while in the princess' service. Though she had not mentioned it herself, Aoi had learned from someone else that Lady Sei had lost her two young daughters in an epidemic of measles just over a year ago, and her husband the year before that. She was appropriately serene and even sometimes cheerful when with others, but Lady Sei had not left behind her grief when she became a lady-in-waiting. Aoi thought of her as wearing a mantle of calm that was insecurely fastened and likely to slip a little at times. Tonight she planned to stay near her and try to prevent any distress. This abundance of light made her think that the princess, too, was aware of Lady Sei's apprehension.

With only slight protests of incompetence, Lady Sei put the plectrums on her fingers and began a low testing of each string, moving the bridges until the pitches were right for the mode in which she meant to play. When she was ready, the princess put aside her game and the ladies rolled up the scroll. The first notes fell like drops into a pool and were followed by a faint cascade across the strings, distilling in sound the mystery of the Night of the Monkey, the pleasure of the warm air, and the expected beauties of spring. Every figure in the room stirred, breathed, and settled, accepting repose.

Just at the end of the music, His Excellency, the minister, came in quietly and sat against the wall until it was finished.

"Ah, how well you play," he said. "I heard it across the garden and I couldn't stay away."

Seldom did such a smile light the princess' face. Her mother had died when she was young, and it seemed to Aoi that the princess was truly herself only in her father's company.

Now she called him forward

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and had a cushion for him set beside her. He sat, put his hands on his knees, and looked about him. "What is this, a party in my own house and I'm not invited?"

The princess raised her hand within her sleeve, to hide a smile.

Aoi could hardly believe that this genial, joking man was the same as the minister who was held in such awe at court. She had seen many instances of his simple domestic involvements when at home. He was likely to stop by his daughter's room to show her a branch of quince he had forced or a kitten belonging to one of the servants. Once she had seen him in the garden at dawn, old clothes tied up around his knees, rearranging the rocks at a bend in the stream that passed under the house from north to south. He liked his servants to have children and each infant was brought for his inspection, which was in reality an excuse to hold a baby, to bounce it on his arm and walk cooing and crowing through the halls, showing it to his daughter and any visitors who might be in residence. Aoi had always thought that his interest in every least detail at home explained his great abilities in government.

Now someone began a tale.

"They say there was a girl in Izu who suffered a most distressing possession. The demon who mastered her made her mock her father, chase away all the servants, eat dirt, and do all sorts of frightful things, finally casting her down a well. But that wasn't the end of it, she came back as a—"

"Oh, please," said the princess, "no ghost stories!"

Aoi glanced at Lady Sei and found her studying a crease in her robe.

"Well, I will tell you a ghost story that has no ghosts," said the minister. He settled his knees wider on the cushion. "All of you know Tomo Akira, who is the Major Controller of the Left?" There were murmurs that showed the ladies recognized the name. "Then you remember what happened when his brother died." Seeing that Lady Sei looked puzzled, he explained.

"His younger brother, the Major Judge, was married late in life to a woman whose husband had died and left her with a half-grown daughter. They lived together happily for some years and then, unfortunately, he died, too, and the poor woman was a widow all over again." He paused, remembering. Aoi knew that he had always been a friend to the judge and she thought

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that he might have known his family, too.

"She was still young," said one of the ladies, "even though her daughter was eleven years old. It was truly sad for her."

"Unh," the minister nodded his head in agreement, glancing at the lady. A look passed round that included Aoi but missed Lady Sei. They were all reminding each other that the young widow had been approached in a crude and persistent way by Akira, the older brother of her dead husband. The minister said now, "After some family misunderstanding," and they all smiled at his delicacy, "Tomo Akira took for himself all her income and left her and the girl to live in poverty in a tiny ramshackle house."

"Was there nothing anyone could do?" Lady Sei was looking at him earnestly, her hands clenched together in her lap.

"Oh, there was criticism and he knew it. But you must understand that he is in a strong position in the government and most people dared not speak openly."

Here, again, the minister used tact in his explanation. The Major Controller of the Left was supposed to see that all officials had title to ricelands which would furnish their prescribed incomes. This meant that he must acquire a constant supply of fields, and they were scarce. In practice, what he often did was to appropriate private fields, telling the owners that the government required them. An honorable man would not have abused this power, but Tomo Akira had only to send a government inspector out and the nervous landowners would pay him not to take their fields, or to take a smaller percentage.

"It seemed there was nothing to be done and the poor widow was so shocked and helpless that she wept herself into an illness and soon died, leaving the girl alone."

"How sad," Lady Sei spoke in a faint voice. She was gazing absently at the minister, as if the figure of the pitiful girl were visible to her eye.

"Yes," he said. "And then the girl disappeared." Even though most of the ladies knew the story, the minister's dramatic telling of it caused them to catch their breath, and they nodded and whispered to each other, confirming what he was saying.

"It still makes me quite ashamed," he said, "but I am afraid no one remembered to look after them. The judge had many friends. Perhaps we didn't

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

realize until too late that there was no family to see to them."

"The saddest thing of all," said one lady, "is that the Major Controller of the Left is famous for his loyalty to his many ladies. He has several secondary wives and there are others who live in nice little houses in the northeast section of the city. He visits them all and is faithful in his care of them. And yet he treated his own kin in such a way!"

Aoi moved beside Lady Sei who was absently folding and unfolding the crease in her robe.

"Well, I saw her last week, the judge's daughter," the minister said, "and it gave me as much of a fright as if I had seen a ghost."

Lady Sei became completely still, beside Aoi.

"I had gone out with only a small company of guards because I wanted to go west of the main avenue. In that section full of robbers, it doesn't do to make a show and attract attention, so I was in a plain split-bamboo carriage with six of my best men as outrunners. I was looking for a certain lacquer maker. The man is so old he will not bother to send his things out, just sits in his shop making beautiful boxes, and one has to go and look for oneself."

How typical of the minister, Aoi thought. He never *had* to go on such errands himself, there were a dozen men he could send instead. But he liked to travel about the city and so he modestly made it sound as though he had the same necessities as everyone else.

"She was walking along the street with the common people, hair wild, robes coming unsewn. But those robes were of figured silk, the hair was still long and heavy, though she hadn't been able to care for it. Her mother's house had been in that same section and, without thinking, I knew at once that she must be the judge's daughter. You might suppose that someone like that, wronged and abandoned in the city, would look pathetic. Actually, her manner was fierce, she glared when someone bumped her and shoved with her elbow and strode on like a boy. And the fierceness was what was pitiful, it was unbearably sad to see."

Little gasps and exclamations showed that the ladies were imagining the scene. "I told the ox-driver to turn the corner and follow her, but just then a band of priests from Enryaku Temple walked in front of us and before we knew it, they were fighting with priests from Kiyomizu Temple. They blocked the street and we

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

couldn't move. I sent the ox-driver on foot to look for her, but she had vanished."

A sob from Lady Sei broke the quiet. Aoi saw that she was pressing quivering fingers to her mouth, surprised herself at the sound.

The minister opened his eyes wide and looked at his daughter.

"Father, why don't I send for those beautiful cards for the poetry game, the ones you gave me last summer. These ladies are always quick at guessing the missing line."

Gradually, Lady Sei's composure returned and they all stayed together until dawn, when it was safe to sleep for a while.

The next day, the minister stopped Aoi in the corridor to ask where he might find the lady who had been so upset by his little story.

"I really must apologize to her," he said. "My daughter has told me her history, but I forgot to ask her which room she has."

Aoi accompanied him to the door, went in to announce the visitor and left them together.

After a few more days of rain, the sun returned and Aoi gave herself up to the rapture of spring, at times spending long hours alone, then eagerly seeking company.

Every new leaf comes out paired
With another leaf—two-by-two
In nature's way. Only the old leaf
Hangs solitary.

Aoi wrote this poem for herself, feeling that she missed her husband most in spring, forgetting that she felt the same loneliness in every season. Why had he died so soon? When there were so many unhappy and indifferent marriages in the world, why had theirs been cut off so early?

So soon to blow shattering
From the bough, these blossoms now
So radiant by my door.

In autumn such thoughts would make her sad; but in spring, missing her husband only made her realize how fortunate she had been for a short while.

Can Paradise be more to hope for
Than all the flowers promised
By these tight green buds?

She wrote this on a pale green square of paper and folded and tied it carefully, slipping a tiny

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lily bud and a long slim leaf through the knot. Her serving woman, O-hana, took it to the princess.

As the weather grew warmer, the numbers of gentlemen making social calls at the mansion increased. This was especially noticeable after word got round that the minister had brought a young cousin from a nearby province, who was said to be already a beauty. Even the women were hardly allowed to see her, she was so protected by her kinsman because of her youth. It was assumed that the minister meant to find a husband for her. There were few men of suitable rank who were uninterested, and so the mansion on the Second Avenue became active with visitors and all the ladies were kept busy receiving them. Notes were sent in for the new young lady and, though the replies were quite ordinary, the lovely handwriting further stirred their interest.

One breezy sunny afternoon, Tomo Akira, the Major Controller of the Left, stopped by to pay his repects to the princess, after a visit to her father. He came along the verandah, dressed in elegant casual clothes, his sleeves blowing and his robes belling around him in the wind. The princess sat with Aoi, screened from view by a curtain on a tall stand and by the outside blinds made of thin strips of bamboo. Through these two layers of transparent baffles, the man on the verandah was visible, though slightly blurred, but he could not see the ladies. The princess had let a small edge of her brocade skirts show beneath the blind but she made no great display of them, as was the fashion at court.

"On a day like this, one wonders that there can ever have been snow in the world," he said as he took the cushion Aoi pushed under the blind for him.

"Yes, isn't it so? 'We come to spring forgetting all the winter's ills . . . ,'" the princess answered with a reference to an old poem, glancing at the same time at Aoi. They both felt embarrassment to be in the presence of the man they had so recently heard criticized, but the glance also acknowledged his attractiveness. He was unusually tall, with a classic full face and a deep voice. His conversation was relaxed and hearty, his skill at apt quotation of poetry almost unnoticed because of the natural way he spoke. He soon rose and took his leave. Aoi and the princess sat wondering if the minister could be mistaken about him.

The princess and her ladies

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were as interested in the young girl as were the gentlemen, so she was asked to visit in the princess' rooms. After delaying several times, she finally came and proved to be so shy and awkward that they all felt sorry for her. Lady Sei, who seemed to have been given the duty of looking after her and keeping her company, sat beside her and, because the girl kept her fan before her face and spoke in a low voice, had to answer for her most of the time.

The princess welcomed her and inquired about her comfort. There was a murmur from behind the fan, which was translated into a graceful speech by Lady Sei. The girl sat straight and still, yet she seemed almost too small to support the several layers of robes that spilled about her. Thin fingers held the fan stiffly upright.

The princess tried to coax her nearer, but the girl only moved a few inches, glancing nervously at Lady Sei.

"How difficult it must be," said the princess, "to have left your family to visit here. Was there no one who could come with you?"

This mention of family made the girl cry, and Lady Sei, apologizing to the princess, took her away.

" 'The heartvine runs so freely . . . ,' " the princess said, looking sympathetically at the departing girl. The next line of the poem was, "On my bamboo fence," and the meaning of it was that a woman, like the vine, needs support.

"Can they really have sent her here all alone?" said one lady.

"I never heard of such a thing!" said another.

With the advance of spring, thievery as well as courtship increased. Aoi began to miss little things from her room, and she heard complaints from other ladies.

"My finest comb, the one made by the lame man down near the river—I can't find it, though I've turned out every box."

"There must be thieves about, but I can't imagine how they get in, with so many people here all the time."

"That's just the trouble, we are often busy and our rooms are left vacant. I have lost a gold scrollweight and two robes."

"I came back to my room this morning and found things moved, so I knew someone had been there. It all makes me terribly uneasy!"

This uneasiness, so out of harmony with the spring proceeding in the garden, grew, and then culminated in the discovery of a violent death.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It was Lady Sei, on her way with Lady Toyu to waken the princess, who found the murdered man. Her shrieking and crying brought Aoi awake with a shock, so that she was upright and on her feet almost before she opened her eyes. Hearing such frantic screaming, every nerve expanded at once, and she felt her flesh pricked and her skin numb.

The doorway was already crowded when she arrived at the room nearby, but because she was known to be skilled at healing and somewhat experienced in physical troubles, way was made for her and she entered. A man in fine clothes lay slumped over on the floor, his back to the door, blood pooled on the boards to one side of him. Lady Sei crouched in the farthest corner, her eyes unseeing, her mouth open in screaming that now made no sound. Aoi went first to her, grasping her arms and shaking her, then holding her close against her chest. She is nearly unstrung, she found herself thinking, feeling shudders so deep it seemed they might rattle loose her poor friend's arms and legs and disconnect her spine.

"Take her," she said to another lady, "hold her, keep her warm, give her wine."

Then, turning again to the body, she moved to the other side and in an instant recognized the face as that of Tomo Akira and a robe caught under him as one of her own, colored with the particular blue dye that only she could make. At the same moment, Lady Toyu returned with the minister and some of his men.

They pushed into the room so roughly that the women began again to cry and wail, unsettled by the impatient force of males intent on doing something practical. These voices of the ladies were distracting and there were too many people in the small room, so the men sent them all away, including Aoi. There were no questions asked at this time. The minister told them all to wait in their various rooms. Two were sent to attend the princess.

Sitting alone in her room, Aoi could hear all the official bustle ordered by the men: the heavy footfalls of guards and police, the rumbles of masculine consultation, the creaks of a carriage brought to the nearest verandah, and the labored breathing of exertion when the body was removed. Maids ran down the corridor with pails and pails of splashing water, their feet sliding and bumping on the floor, their breath full of sobs and cries.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Each lady was visited individually by two of the Imperial Police. Aoi, when they came to her, could only tell them that she had been asleep. They asked careful questions about the blue-dyed robe; she told them it was hers and that she had not missed it and did not know how it came to be found caught under the murdered man.

When finally they were released from their isolation, the women gathered in twos and threes, sitting close together, weeping and twisting their fingers. Every shutter and door was opened, as if air and wind were needed to sweep away unhealth. The princess sat often and privately with her father and once was heard speaking hysterically. Lady Sei lay closed in her room for three days.

The women all assumed the the Major Controller had spent the night with a lady and that he had been killed by a thief. After the many thefts during the past two weeks, this conclusion seemed clearly logical. Yet who had the lady been? The occupant of that room was still away on a visit to her family; Aoi's robe had been under the body and she could not explain why. Though she sat with them, Aoi began to feel shunned by the other women. Their discussions always sheered off when the question of the robe was approached. Uneasiness entered her mind.

On a warm bright morning full of birdsong, Aoi was sent for and escorted by two burly guards to the main hall, where she was seated alone, facing a long line of men, all sitting formally on the bare floor. The minister, at the center of the line, was flanked by the captain of his men, the head of the Bureau of Imperial Police, and ten guards who wore the uniform of mounted troops and who had brought in with them a faint smell of horses and leather. Seeing this solemn phalanx, Aoi felt threat in their number and in their stern eyebrows and firmly set elbows. A tiny tremor invaded her limbs but she sat quietly, feeling small on her cushion amid so much empty floor.

The minister, now representing official power, had subtly changed. His dignity was massive, his ability to decide and to enforce lay in every plane of his face, every stir of his shoulders and press of his fingertips against the rich dark silk of his robe. Aoi had seen him at court, on his way to call on the emperor, visiting the princess; but she had never seen him in official meeting. Understanding that she was at the center of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this present gathering, she longed to look up and find the Great Minister of the Right replaced by the amiable man who found delight in kittens and children.

The head of the police spoke to her in a grave voice. "We have been investigating the murder of the Major Controller of the Left. He died from a deep cut in the belly, which we think was made by a long knife or by a sword, though the weapon has not been found. But underneath the body, so caught that it was impossible to remove it, was one of your robes, which everyone recognized. True, it was not in your room that the body was found. But this fact of the robe seems to us to involve you, and I must tell you that we think you are the one who killed him."

Aoi drew a trembling breath. Somehow this was not unexpected. She looked at the minister. His face was solemn and he turned his eyes away, toward the man who had spoken. She saw that because of his office, he would deal with her impersonally, as a member of the proceedings and no more. Yet he behaved oddly, at times not meeting her eyes, at times gazing at her with a steady look that seemed to imply encouragement.

A cold twist of anger began under Aoi's ribs, but she presented to them a face of concerned reasonableness.

"We all assumed that it was a thief, someone from outside. There have been many things missing lately. Could not the robe, too, have been stolen and dropped when the thief encountered the controller?"

The head of police did not relax his stiff posture and turned aside this speculation with the air of one who has examined every possibility and found the truth. He took her questions to imply that she was raising possibilities he had not had the intelligence to think of for himself, and he answered her impatiently.

"We have had guards posted since a week before the murder, because of the complaints of theft. So we know that there were no intruders during that time."

"And the lady in whose room he was found?"

"She is still away, we know that she did not return."

"But you knew that the controller had visited that night and that he had not left?"

The captain of the minister's men spoke now, with exaggerated patience. "My lady," shaking his head, "we were on the watch for thieves, not gentle-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

men of the court. Surely you know how many princes and advisors and captains visit here."

Looking for a little adventure, Aoi finished for him in her mind, using a phrase all the ladies had adopted to describe the attentions of those men who were intent on getting behind the screen and the curtain of a lady, seeing her face in the moonlight, making love to her and staying the night. Most of the palace women played this pleasant game of love, and just before dawn, in good weather and bad but especially in spring, anyone who rose early would see a parade of hastily dressed gentlemen making their way home, to be followed soon after by pages going in the direction of the ladies, bringing carefully written "next morning letters," which made poetry of the night's happenings. Aoi suppressed her temper. If they thought this needed explaining to her, how could they think she had spent the night with the Major Controller?

"And how did Lady Sei come to find him?" she asked.

"The door panel was not quite pulled to and she saw him as they passed by, she and the other lady."

Aoi was silent, thinking. Lady Sei had found him, but had she known to look for him? She was still emotionally unsteady, after the deaths in her family. Could she have killed the man because he approached her? Aoi thought that, after hearing the story of the judge's daughter, Lady Sei would not have received the controller.

Could she have killed him *because* of the judge's daughter? This seemed more logical. Yet it was Aoi who was accused and she did not want to mention Lady Sei as an alternative suspect.

The minister was looking at her ferociously. She had been quiet too long, she must answer them.

"I see you have me in a trap of inflexible logic," she said. The minister closed his eyes and threw back his head. "I did nothing and I ask you to let me prove it."

The men all looked at the minister, who considered and conferred and thought about it, bent toward the head of police and murmured to the captain of the guards, and looked from under his brows at Aoi, and finally said, "Yes, we agree. Stay here and you may talk to anyone you please. But you must not leave."

Aoi bowed, moved to the door and bowed again, hardly able to bend for the stiffness of out-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rage in her spine. Faith in her own ability to find the truth kept her from fear, but such wrong-headedness made her angry.

She returned to her room and found her maid waiting near the door. "Ah, O-hana. Bring the things for making tea." It would concentrate her mind, Aoi thought, to make an orderly arrangement of utensils, boil and cool water, clean and warm cups, measure and steep the dark curled leaves. The brew itself she knew as a medicinal aid, likely also to stimulate thought. O-hana had been taught to assist, and now Aoi kept her with her for company, explaining the accusation just made and soothing her distress about it. They discussed every possibility, sitting with their backs to the outside door, to avoid distraction. Through the long afternoon they sat, talking and thinking, forgetting to eat, rising finally after dark, almost dizzy from drinking tea. "Go to the kitchen and see what you can find. I must eat or this tea will keep me awake all night. Bring lots." But no matter how much I eat, I will never sleep tonight, Aoi thought.

She began the next day by talking to each lady individually. This took time because they all wanted to express, though somewhat nervously, their disbelief that Aoi had committed such a crime, then go into every detail of what they had done that night and of how they had reacted to the first shock of the discovery of the body. It suited Aoi's purpose to hear them speak at length, allowing her to build a complete picture of that time in the women's wing. She asked them all the same two questions: Who had visited most recently? Had any possessions disappeared during the week before the murder? From the answers to the first question, she made a list; to the second, several ladies answered yes.

Assuming that the men who were guarding the mansion had really made it impossible for intruders to enter, Aoi concluded that it was someone living inside who had been removing small articles from the ladies' rooms. To the servants, she never gave a thought. It was not even to be imagined that the minister could have a thief among his people, he was too astute for that. Nor did she waste time worrying about the many visitors. It was possible that a member of her class might be a thief, but except for the Major Controller himself, there was no one visitor who had been in the mansion often

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

enough to account for so many stolen things. It was on the minister's cousin that her interest settled, the mysterious young woman who had come alone from the country.

When Aoi asked to speak with her, she was told that the girl had returned to her parent's house, but that no one knew when. She asked what room she had been given and was startled to find that the women were not sure, but that the ladies on either side of the room in which the body was found had assumed that she was there, because of slight noises heard from time to time. The information that the girl was gone served to open vistas to Aoi, and she felt energy surging through her as her mind ascended from one now obvious truth to the next until she found that she could survey the whole of the Major Controller's death with understanding. She sent for Lady Sei.

By this time, Lady Sei had recovered enough to be able to talk about that terrible morning. Sure that she knew now what happened, Aoi did not waste time.

"Tell me," she said, "how did you find the judge's daughter?"

She could see that Lady Sei was doubting that she had heard Aoi ask such a question, also that her unbelief was followed by relief and eagerness to tell at last a secret she was finding it poisonous to keep. Not protesting or denying, she answered at once.

"Oh, I will be so glad to tell you about it! I don't know how I could have taken such a responsibility, and now look what has come of it."

The story was much as Aoi had deduced it, only she had not known the particulars.

The minister's tale of the abandoned girl had obsessed Lady Sei, and because she had so recently lost her own young girls, she could not forget it. She felt that, though she had watched helplessly as her daughters died, in this case the girl was alive and she might be able to rescue her. The minister, when he called on her the next day, had mentioned the name of the ox-driver who had run after the girl. By various caprices of not taking this carriage because it was too fine and not being quite ready when the next one approached, Lady Sei had managed to make a trip with the same driver. When she mentioned the story, he spoke of it readily and took her to the corner, this time turning into the side street. He even agreed to make some inquiries and almost at once learned the where-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

abouts of the daughter of a judge, the girl who thought so much of herself, who kept her long hair and wore dirty silk robes. Lady Sei thanked him, commented on the poor condition of the neighborhood, proceeded on her errand, and returned to the mansion. Then she sent a request to her old nurse, who lived in a small house by herself, and the judge's daughter was found and taken there.

Lady Sei laughed and shook her head, remembering. "We had to bathe her, of course, and wash her hair. It took us almost all day. She screamed and cried when we tried to comb it, and it is long, almost to her feet. But my nurse is strong and finally she sat on her, literally sat on her back while I held her arms, until she realized that it was something we really meant to do. Then she asked us to let her go and she sat patiently or actually helped us.

"We explained to her that we wanted to restore her to the kind of girl she would have been if her mother's husband had not died and all her income been taken away. We thought that would make her happy, but she was sullen and angry. She said we couldn't change all that time in the city.

"When her mother died and she had to leave her house, she was taken in by a servant whose husband was a fan-maker. They gave her a place to sleep and what food they could spare, but they could not treat her as a lady's daughter. She had to live as they did.

"We coached her. 'Don't speak,' we said. 'You have forgotten gentle speech, so until we can help you more, just murmur a little.' Her language! She spoke like a man, and in such a big voice!" Lady Sei's chin trembled. "It was because of the way she had been living, teased and shoved around . . ." She could not continue for a long time. Then she sighed.

"Well, we dressed her and showed her how to display her hems under the curtain-screen and how to hold a fan before her face, even behind the screeen. Surprisingly, her handwriting was good. She had sometimes helped decorate the fans and she had practiced on a stone, she said, washing it over and over, sometimes using only water to write with because they could allow her no ink. It was the only thing she could keep from her former life. And she still remembered the old poems, so we thought she could manage to answer any notes she was sent, once the gentlemen found her.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I had to give her a respectable background, so I thought of bringing her here in secret. I knew I must keep her hidden because any lady who met her would know at once there was something strange about her. But I hoped that some of that would be accounted for by saying she was a provincial girl.

"There is a maid who likes to think she knows everything that happens here. I told her the girl was a visitor and immediately she said that she recognized her, she was a certain cousin of the minister. She said we must be careful with her, because she was so young and she put her in the vacant room and took it on herself to serve her. So everything was made easy, because of that officious maid, and I thought how lucky it was."

"Didn't you think the minister would hear of it?"

"I did and I worried every day. But he must be too busy to concern himself much with who is in the women's wing."

How little she knows the minister, Aoi thought.

"She soon had many visitors, but the maid and I kept them at a distance. I planned to make sure the only one she received was the Major Controller of the Left." She reflected a moment. "After I had met him, I could hardly believe he could have been so wicked to the girl and her mother. He was intelligent and there was an attractiveness about him, don't you think?"

Aoi nodded. "But didn't he recognize her? And what did she think of the plan?"

"She said he had never seen her, her mother was proper about such things and kept her hidden. The girl understood everything, that we would not let her go until he made a commitment to her as concubine and that he would care for her as he should have done three years ago, which seemed to me a just thing." Sudden tears shook her voice. "So we taught her all sorts of small matters of dress and etiquette, and explained to her that I would always be in the next room, that she should finally allow him behind her curtains and that, after three nights of staying with her, the connection would be official and he might take her to live somewhere where he could see her privately."

"So she understood and agreed to this plan of yours? Then why did she kill him?"

Lady Sei was bent by a fresh spasm of tears. Aoi waited until she could go on.

"He must have come very late, after I had gone to sleep.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And I think she found that she could not do it, allow him so close to her."

"I see," said Aoi. Lady Sei was still struggling for control of her voice and Aoi did not ask for more explanation. The girl had made a rational decision on a course that, emotionally, she could not follow. It took no great effort of imagination to fill out the whole scene from what Lady Sei had said.

He would have come late at night, possibly after some other visit in the mansion, sitting first on the verandah, talking quietly, urging her to allow him inside the bamboo blind because he could not hear her well from such a distance and he was so anxious to speak more directly to her about important things: how the small whisper of her voice was as sweet as the night-settled trillings of birds; how he could tell that she was a person of unusual sincerity from the perfume that escaped her robes; how he longed for a really pure sensitivity, someone who could understand his feelings when he saw the moon's reflection bouncing on the water of the garden pond, as if it were a small fleet of golden boats. The Major Controller, with his ready poetry, would have been eloquent and tender, touching with reverence the edges of her robes, encircling her shoulders as he talked of moonlight, slowly, slowly moving aside the fan.

The girl could not have been expected to know that she would suddenly recall his scent in her mother's house, perhaps his voice, and that all her feelings from that time would rise with volcanic strength. But Lady Sei might have known, if she had not been so absorbed in her precarious plan.

During Aoi's reflections, Lady Sei had achieved calm. "Poor girl. How could I have expected her to behave as a young lady would? She had been living in the city, learning things that young ladies never know."

"She had learned to steal, too, hadn't she?"

"Yes. I found I couldn't watch her all the time, I had my duties. The things she took were put in with those of the lady whose room she occupied, so I had no way of knowing she was stealing. Until she took my sash and carelessly left it out—then I remembered all the complaints I had heard."

"That stolen robe of mine has caused me to be accused of murder," said Aoi. "But please don't distress yourself. There is more behind this strange event than even you realize." She would not tell Lady Sei more, but

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

asked another question.

"The knife she used, that was stolen, too?"

"Yes, from the fan-maker."

"Can you bring it to me?"

"She doesn't have it."

"Unh?"

"She pushed it into the ground beside the trunk of a pine tree in the garden. It's probably still there."

Aoi felt her chest rise with lightness. A workman's knife, a rough article from the city, was something none of the princess' ladies would have opportunity to acquire and would be proof of Aoi's innocence, if found. She would send O-hana to see that it was there, then arrange for the minister's men to discover it.

Lady Sei was explaining how the girl had escaped the mansion. "After she stabbed him, she ran into the garden and hid, then left during the confusion when I screamed so." She looked at Aoi. "Forgive me, but you see now that I had not only the shock of finding the body and recognizing your robe under it, but of knowing the girl had killed him and was gone." All her tears came back. "I *could* not tell them what I knew! But I would not have let them harm you."

Aoi's sympathy wavered. She was not sure yet how much she had already been harmed.

"Where is the girl now?"

"She is at my nurse's house. I have not seen her, of course, but I have had messages. She is afraid but she trusts us—though," crying again, "I am not sure she should. But it is just what she needs, to live quietly with a firm and loving woman who cares for her and teaches her. You should see how young that old woman has become, now that she is again responsible for someone's training."

Aoi had no need to ask how her robe had come to be under the body. It seemed obvious that it had been caught there, the outer robe of several the girl was wearing, and that she had slipped it off to free herself. The question was why she had been wearing it. That, too, explained itself, the girl would have tried on her stolen clothes when she had the chance.

In spite of feeling that Lady Sei had been foolish in bringing the girl here and causing so much harm, Aoi was able to dismiss her kindly. She felt certain now that she herself was in no danger, if the knife could be found where it was said to be hidden. And she had one other certainty, the thing she had withheld from Lady Sei.

The next day, O-hana

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

searched the garden and found the knife beside a tree next to the wall. Aoi instructed her to leave it untouched and to have someone keep watch to see that it was not disturbed. Word was sent that the Lady Aoi, rude as it was to ask him to come to her, would like to speak to the Great Minister of the Right.

He came alone, not with the guards and captains of their last encounter, and they sat together by the open door of Aoi's room. It was late afternoon and the garden was misted with green, a different hue on the lacy shape of each variety of tree or shrub, vivid where it showed against the darkness of pine or camellia. The water of the stream and the pond was sheened with reflection, darting and elastic. New shoots of bamboo spread sharp leaves, growing out from the joints, flat shafts of iris were beginning to fan out above ground, and the gnarled brown vines of wisteria were hung with feathers of new leaves. The minister sat for a while without speaking, seeming to loosen his hold on himself, as he relaxed from court posture into the ease of a man at home.

"Ah, lady," he said at last, speaking in a gentle voice, "events do not always turn out as we intend they should."

"You are master of your house. All this never could have happened without your fostering."

"Unh." He looked still at the stream and the pond, the swaying green clusters of bamboo leaves, lifting on warm airs. "Perhaps it is a sin to meddle in other lives. I saw it as trying to right an old wrong. But I had to work through someone else, I could not do anything myself. I could only speak a word to the ox-driver, pretend ignorance of a strange girl in my house, give her the protection of one of my women, point in the right direction that arrogant man from the controller's bureau. And then I had to participate in that farce with the Imperial Police. Forgive me for that. But only a woman could have solved this affair."

Aoi stirred on her cushion and leaned forward, toward the freshening garden, away from the violent and alarming events of the past weeks. "All that is in the past. We have now the girl, who must be saved."

She filled her lungs with spring sweetness, feeling at last free, certain that she could trust the minister.

"What shall we do?" he asked.

"That pine that grows behind the bamboos, the one with a long branch stretching toward the pond. She left the knife be-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

side it—a man's knife."

"And it is still there? Then it will be easy enough to blame this death on thieves. One of my men will remember seeing a figure running just outside the gate."

The guards had insisted that no unknown man had entered the grounds that night, but all along people had believed in a murderer-thief. Now they would welcome this solution. Aoi knew the minister's influence and felt glad of the protection of it.

"The girl is with Lady Sei's nurse, apparently a good woman. She is being 'brought up,' receiving the care she was denied after her mother died."

"Ah-h, I didn't know where she had gone. You think it best to leave her there?"

"You will provide for her now?"

"Of course. I will see that she has income, and we will continue to let Lady Sei make her happy."

"I am not sure she will be happy, she has had bad experiences and they came just when she was growing up. But she has character, I think."

They sat on in the slanting sunlight. Aoi remembered the striding figure of the Major Controller and the frail-looking bundle of robes that the girl had appeared to be. She thought of the brevity of life and the unexpected turns that fate can bring during our short, dream-like trip between eternities.

"How strange it is," she said. "All this began on the Night of the Monkey, when we were afraid of the intrusion of death.

"What cracking, breaking strength is this
That parts the stones where I walk?"

Aoi spoke the opening lines of a poem. The minister, understanding her thought, closed his eyes and threw back his head, in a gesture Aoi now recognized as one of pleasure and amusement. He added his own lines, to complete the poem.

"Only this fragile green shoot,
Growing toward the sun.

"I begin to think, lady, that the intrusion of life is more to be feared than the seeds of death."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE STORY THAT WON



Arthur Tress

The April Mysterious Photograph contest (photo above) was won by B. Newton of Saline, Michigan. Honorable mentions go to Mary Ann Hanada of Portland, Oregon; James Aiello of Sea Cliff, New York; J. E. Lavene of Midland, North Carolina; Katherine Floerke of Minneapolis, Minnesota; Barbara Tatom of Magnolia, Texas; Sandra Scales of Charlotte, North Carolina; Virginia Long of San Antonio, Texas; William C. Geer of West Valley City, Utah; A. C. Williams of Falkville, Alabama; V. H. Adair of Claremont, California; and Mary Maxine Parrish of Prairie Village, Kansas.

CORPUS DELICTI by B. Newton

"Let me see if I got this straight, sergeant," said Captain Baum, running a hand through his hair and leaning 'way back in his chair. "You're telling me that just a little while ago some girl killed an old woman because the old woman wanted her red shoes. Is that right?"

"Yes sir. That's right."

"And," continued Captain Baum, "the only thing left of this old woman is this broom, this black hat, and," he picked a pair of wet boots up off the table, "these boots. There's nothing left of her whatsoever, except these articles. That's what you're trying to tell me?"

"That's right, sir. She says it was an accident and that she's turning herself in."

"But you can't find a body?"

"That's correct, sir. We can't find a body and we've searched extensively."

"Well, I'll tell you what, sergeant, with only these boots and things we got no case. We need a body. No body, no case. You send that girl home to . . . where'd you say she lived again?"

"Kansas, sir."

"Right, Kansas, wherever in the hell that is. You send her home to Kansas until we find out more. Besides, we're still working on that case of the old lady killed by the falling house. And believe me, I don't need another headache."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Allergic To Death

by Al and Mary Kuhfeld



It had been a long, cold, lingering winter; but now the season had turned, the air waxed warm, and the bees and flowers were doing a prodigious trade in nectar and pollen. Parks and yards were ablaze with tulips, elms dripped catkins on the sidewalk, and even vacant lots were golden with dandelions.

Jack Hafner and Thor Nygaard were supposed to have the afternoon off. Hafner was scheduled for his annual physical; Nygaard was going to take his son fishing. But there they were in the squad room on the second floor of Hedeby's police department, listening to a determined old woman insisting there'd been a murder. Impatiently, they heard her out.

Four days ago, she said, her brother-in-law had been found dead by his housekeeper. Ralph Bjornlund had just turned eighty-two and was the wealthy member of his family, better off than any of the others. "And he was a mean, crochety old thing, too," she said. "So there was no feeling of kindness or gratitude to hold his killer's hand. Why, there was many a time I felt like smacking him myself."

Hafner nodded agreement; the police were very familiar

Illustration by Jim Ceribello

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with Ralph Bjornlund. They had fielded a constant stream of complaints from the old man about his neighbors and their children, who were all thieves, noisemakers, trespassers, and vandals, to hear him tell it. And they had had to handle him carefully: the man was not only wealthy and influential, but had a weak heart and severe asthma. It would not have done to infuriate him that one straw more, and trigger an attack.

"What makes you think his death was suspicious?" asked Hafner.

Helga Bjornlund, a little old lady with angry-pink cheeks and an outraged look in her pale blue eyes, replied: "They said he must have gone for a walk in his back yard, and had an asthma attack. Nonsense! Ralph knew better than to go out in a yard full of pollen, any more than he'd eat eggs for breakfast or allow a cat in his house. If he wanted to take a walk, he chose rainy days, or wore a mask.

"The medical examiner came and looked at the body; and when I asked, he said, 'No, Ralph didn't have his inhaler in his pocket.' He would have gone out into that dry, sunny yard without his inhaler only at gunpoint. And make no mistake, he knew how bad the pollen was out there on any given day."

"How's that?" asked Nygaard.

"He had a pollen counter by his window," said Mrs. Bjornlund. "I've seen him consult it, then call the radio station to confirm the count. He was very careful. I wish I had stayed in town right after he died, but I absolutely had to go; it was the state florists' convention, and I was to give a talk on the problems and benefits of a one-person operation. The medical examiner had said he wanted to perform an autopsy. I said nothing; I assumed he would, and I was waiting to see what the results were. You see, it may not have been pollen at all, but poison.

"Then I got home—and there was nothing but an urn of ashes. No autopsy at all. So here I am. And I tell you, he was murdered. Now that he's been cremated, his body can't be tested. But you're the police, and I'm sure you have other ways of finding out. I want something done."

More to get rid of her than for any other reason, the pair promised to look into it. The lady went away, Hafner's physical confirmed his suspicion that he was in excellent health, and Nygaard's boy fell out of the boat into Lake Birka.

Thor was still laughing over it the next morning. "I hauled him out by the scruff of his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

neck," he said to Hafner, "and be damned if he didn't still have hold of his rod—and be double damned if the sunfish wasn't still on the line!" Nygaard was a very big man, with a thick sheaf of straight blond hair and a lot of jaw. His laugh was a loud haw, haw, haw, an infectious noise.

"You'd better have it mounted," Jack said, smiling. "Fish stories work better when you can point to the fish. You'll be telling this one for quite a while, and your son after you. That fish could become an heirloom."

Thor went to refill his blue mug with black coffee and came back more serious. "Gonna be rough investigating a possible murder when the body's been cremated."

"If Helga Bjornlund thought something was funny, why didn't she hang around to make sure they autopsied him?" Jack said aggrievedly.

"She's inherited the biggest share of his estate, you know," said Nygaard. "I already called City Hall to ask about the will."

"Is that so?" said Hafner, his dark eyes glinting. "How about that? Any other relatives?"

"A brother and a niece."

"So maybe she's scared one of them will say something, and decided to raise the question herself."

"Or, maybe she's right; one of them killed him," said Nygaard. "Or someone outside the family."

Hafner nodded. "Or maybe the doctor was right, and he died of natural causes."

Thor laughed. "Now that we've covered all the possibilities, who gets to phone Dr. Stark?"

"You do it. I've got a burglary report to wind up."

Christian Stark, the medical examiner, greeted Nygaard familiarly. "Something I can do for you?" he asked.

"Remember old Ralph Bjornlund? Died about a week ago?"

"Yeah, heart attack. Why?"

"Someone came in yesterday to say she thought he'd been murdered."

Dr. Stark snorted. "Baloney! Poor old guy, he was allergic to just about everything in the world, had been for years. Had asthma, too. It's a wonder he lasted as long as he did."

"You were the one who went to see him when the report came in?"

"Yes. Looked like he went out for a walk, had an asthma attack that triggered his heart. That was the first time I'd seen him professionally; he went to a specialist in Minneapolis. When they put his house up for sale, I'll be tempted to put in a bid."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Surprised, Nygaard asked, "What for? He lived in a house the size of City Hall. All your kids have left home now, haven't they?"

"Yes. But it's got an air-conditioning system you wouldn't believe. The place is almost hermetically sealed, and the air that does get in is filtered, cooled, or heated, has moisture added or taken out—it's like a perfect day in the mountains, being in that house. And I've got a few allergies myself, including hay fever. Spring and fall are hell on people like me."

"So why did he go outdoors for a walk?"

"Beats me. He might not have realized how bad the air was outside, how full of pollen it was. Like I said, inside his house, it was sheer heaven."

"New system, huh? He wasn't used to how well it worked?"

Dr. Stark hesitated. "Well, no. I guess he'd had it for a couple of years, anyway."

"Our informant thought you were going to do an autopsy, but you didn't. How come?"

"His brother objected. And there was nothing to justify one, really. He was an old man with a bad heart, asthma, and a lot of allergies. His back yard had several big trees and was full of flowers, including a big lilac bush right by the door. I had to stop once during my examination to use my inhaler."

"Found him outdoors, then?"

"No, he managed to stagger back inside. He was right inside the back door."

"If he was so allergic, why did he have a yard full of flowers?"

"Same reason I do," explained Dr. Stark patiently. "He liked to stand inside his air-conditioned house and look out at them. They're very pretty."

"Did Helga Bjornlund also object to an autopsy?"

"Helga—she's the little white-haired one? His other brother's widow?"

"Yes."

"No, not to me. I explained to the brother that I didn't consider anything suspicious, but it would help my record-keeping if I could put down an exact cause of death. Kol Bjornlund overruled me—and the deceased's brother, as closest relative, took precedence."

"I see. Thanks, Chris."

"Any time, Thor. How's the wife?"

"Due in three weeks. Eric's hoping for a sister, believe it or not."

Dr. Stark laughed. "Good for him. Call again if I can answer any more questions."

"Will do." Nygaard tossed the receiver into its cradle and went to sit on Hafner's desk and tell him about the conversation. "I'm not sure there's anything in this," he concluded. "On the other hand, Mrs. Bjornlund

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seems damn sure something's wrong." He looked over his notes. "And if the body was found inside that high-tech house, how come Chris had to stop during his examination to use his hay fever medication?"

"Mr. Bjornlund probably got pollen or whatever all over his clothes during that walk in the yard," said Hafner. "I've got a friend who's so allergic to cats he can't go into a room where one has been sleeping, even if it isn't there any more."

"Helga said he'd never leave his house when it was dry and sunny, remember? And if he had enough pollen on his clothes to trigger an attack in the M.E., he must have not only gone for a walk, but been out there working in the flower beds. There's no mention of any dirt or any other sign of that. Anyway, he knew better." Nygaard frowned ponderously. "Maybe there is something fishy here."

Hafner knew that look. "Hey, now, slow down!" he said. "We've got enough of a caseload. There's that flasher, and the Geirson burglary, and what about the drug-dealing going on in the park? We're supposed to go out there this afternoon."

"Yeah, yeah," said Nygaard, waving a big paw dismissively. "Those pushers aren't going anywhere. You go talk to the brother; his name's Kol Bjornlund. He's the one who put the kibosh on the autopsy. I'll go see the niece, Anora. She's Kol's daughter; we'll see if their stories agree, okay?"

Kol Bjornlund reminded Hafner of a condor. He was bald and tall and very thin, with a jutting beak of a nose, small yellow eyes, and a long wrinkled neck. He opened his arms a little in an expression of bewilderment and exasperation, and Hafner was almost surprised not to see feathers.

"My brother is dead, sergeant," he said. "He has been cremated and the ashes duly deposited in an urn that will be placed in a niche in Memorial Hall at the cemetery. Surely if there were any questions about his death, the time to have raised them has passed."

"Maybe," said Hafner, secretly agreeing with him. "Why did you object to an autopsy?"

"My brother had been in ill health for a number of years," said Kol. "He had a heart attack and died. Your medical examiner said that was the case. My daughter said, and I agreed, there was no reason to go poking about in poor Ralph's innards in an attempt to confirm the obvious."

"You are the executor of the will?" asked Hafner.

"Yes."

"Would you mind telling me

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the extent of your brother's estate?"

"Yes, I do mind. I don't see that it's any of your business."

Hafner sighed. "We have received a complaint that your brother's death was suspicious, that in fact it was murder. If you choose to make it hard for us, the investigation will go on longer and you will be considerably bothered before we're finished with court orders and search warrants. I'm only trying to finish this up quickly. Your cooperation will speed the process, Mr. Bjornlund."

Kol fixed Hafner with a beady eye. "Very well," he said ungraciously. "The report is still being prepared for probate, but it should total about eight hundred thousand dollars—not including the house, which goes outright to my sister-in-law, Helga. I imagine she'll sell it; she has no need for a house that size. She also gets half of everything else. The rest is to be divided between myself and my daughter Anora. Anora receives the bigger share, and I the smaller. I might add that this is the fourth will my brother made in as many years. He quarreled with one or another of us frequently, and kept his lawyer busy redrafting the thing."

"So Anora's share will amount to—?" Hafner paused inquiringly.

"Around a quarter of a million. I'll get perhaps a hundred fifty thousand, mostly in artwork. It's a shame Ralph died when he did; I'd been getting along with him to a degree lately, and I hear he'd quarreled with Helga."

Anora Bjornlund was slim to the point of delicacy above the waist, but had a sturdy peasant build below. Everything in her apartment seemed to be handcrafted, except the large gray cat that regarded Nygaard unwinkingly from a windowsill. There was a big loom in one corner, and she distracted Nygaard by constantly twirling a spindle during their conversation, feeding a thin twist of wool to it from a combed wad in her left hand.

"I began weaving when I was in high school," she said, smiling at him. Her hair was pale, increasing the impression of fragility. "I inherited some of my uncle's allergies, and spent a lot of time indoors."

"I see," said Nygaard. "How did you get along with your uncle?" he asked.

"Oh, sometimes well and other times not," she said, giving the wooden spindle another twirl. She was wearing a stiff jacket of some nubbly stuff over a denim skirt.

"What was your relationship

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

at the time he died?"

"We were making up from a fight," she said. "It's always been harder to deal with him when he's right than when he's wrong. I wanted to give up my job as an art teacher and open a little shop to sell weaving materials and take commissions for special articles. He wouldn't give me the money to get started, so I borrowed some from the bank. Well, the shop failed, as he said it would, and he was perfectly insufferable about it. I got my job back at the university, swallowed my pride, and sent him a peace offering. Mr. Brodd was there when he got the package, and he said Uncle seemed quite touched."

There was a little flare of pride in her pale eyes as she said this, and she stopped the spindle and began to wrap the new yarn around its shank.

"Had he quarreled with anyone else lately?"

"Yes, Aunt Helga. I don't know what it was about, but he'd sent for Mr. Brodd again." Her smile was malicious. "He's—he was poor Uncle's long-suffering attorney. I suppose there have been four or five new wills in the past several years."

"What about your father? Did he get along with his brother?"

She twirled her spindle and began again to spin yarn. "Same as me: off and on. Although I believe their friendship was on again lately."

"You'd been out to visit your uncle recently?"

"Oh, no. The gift I sent him was just the first move in the peace negotiations. I hadn't seen him in person for over a year. Too bad he died; there's no telling how well we might have gotten along in future."

Over lunch Nygaard said, "Well, they agree Kol was getting along all right and Anora had opened a channel of communication with the old man." He took an enormous bite out of his hamburger. "How about you go see the lawyer—Harold Brodd—and I go see Helga and ask a few more questions?"

Hafner checked the interior of his ham and cheese for pickles—he didn't like pickles. "And which of us gets to explain to Captain Hamond why we haven't followed up on the Gierson burglary? No way, Thor. I told you before, we haven't got time for this wild goose chase, especially not when I have a very good lead on that burglar."

"All right, you go talk to the burglary victim. I'll go see Helga and Mr. Brodd both."

Harold Brodd was in his sixties, a vigorous silver-haired man, with an open, friendly, intelligent face. "The whole fam-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ily is a pack of loons," he said with a short laugh. "And Ralph Bjornlund was not the worst of them."

"Who is the worst?" asked Nygard, settling back in the comfortable leather chair in the attorney's office.

"Anora, probably. Her name should have been Arachne, after the spider. Spinning and weaving her life away—oh, she's got talent; I've seen some very fine things come off her loom or away from her knitting needles. But then she'll turn around and make ugly, lumpish wall hangings or stuff that looks like low-grade burlap. And she's a sucker for any sociologic fad that comes along. Transactional analysis, tarot, primal scream, herbal teas, sensory deprivation—I hear she's into rune stones now."

"Do you know anything about her making up her quarrel with her Uncle Ralph?"

"Oh, yes. She sent him a hand-knitted sweater—not of wool, he was allergic to wool. She made the supreme sacrifice and knitted it in orlon. Her loom probably wouldn't speak to her for a week. Ralph had invited me to lunch, and the sweater came in the mail while I was there. He opened the package and looked at it, and actually seemed touched. He was a very peculiar old man, you know. Short tempered and cruel most of the time, but eventually ready to make up and try again."

"Maybe he felt close to Anora because she'd inherited his allergies."

"Not all of them. Pollen bothered her, and chocolate. I used to tease her that her complexion was so clear because she never ate chocolate. But eggs were okay. Good thing, too; being able to eat eggs sustained her through her six months as a vegetarian."

"What's your opinion of Anora's father?"

"Kol? Well, it's from him she got the Bjornlund tendency to lunacy. But his comes out in spite and meanness, as it did in his brother. Not that she's not spiteful, but she's more goofy than anything. Kol could carry a grudge better than Ralph, and he had more of the family tendency to greediness. But he's not vicious and crafty, at least not as much as the rest of them."

"How about Helga?"

"Oh, she's all right. She only married into the Bjornlund line. Her husband, Sven Bjornlund, was the baby of the family. He died of cancer ten or twelve years ago, but she stayed close to the other two. She always got along better with Ralph and Kol than Sven did anyway. A bit opinionated and more stubborn than you'd think on seeing what a sweet-looking old thing

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

she is. Not vicious like the real Bjornlunds are, but a whole lot smarter."

Nygaard found Helga in her greenhouse, dabbing a flower with a small, soft brush. There was a strong odor of earth and growing things, muggier and more pungent than the spring air outdoors. As he watched, she walked a little way down the row, and dabbed the brush onto another flower. What was she doing? wondered Nygaard. Killing aphids, maybe? Treating some kind of plant disease? He started towards her and she caught his movement out of the corner of her eye. "Oh, hello, Sergeant Nygaard," she said, turning and putting the brush into her apron pocket. "Have you brought me some news of poor Ralph?"

"No, not yet," said Nygaard. "But I have come to interview you, if that's all right."

"Certainly, certainly. Come with me." She led the way to her tiny office between the greenhouse and her retail store. She pulled off cotton gloves as she sat down. "What do you want to ask me?"

"First, what were you doing in there?"

"Pollinating. Bees are so careless, you know. This way I know who the parents of my seedlings are."

He chuckled. "I see. Did you know Ralph Bjornlund was about to make a new will?"

She smiled sadly. "I suspected it. He generally did when quarrels got serious or went on a long time."

"What had you quarreled with him about?"

She sighed. "My greenhouse. He wanted me to give it up and come be his live-in housekeeper. He was always afraid I'd come and visit him right after working with my flowers, without changing clothes, and set off an attack. He said I was getting old and forgetful." She shrugged at Nygaard. "Now, I can't deny I'm getting on, but I don't think I'm in the least senile. Anyway, I didn't want to go live with him. He's never kept a housekeeper longer than six months, and I couldn't believe it would be any different with me." She stopped, amused. "So in order not to set myself up for a quarrel with him, I quarreled with him. Maybe he was right, maybe I'm getting soft in the head."

Nygaard didn't think so. "Who in the family was most in need of money?"

She thought about that. "Anora, I suppose. She has no head for money, poor thing, and she was getting seriously behind in paying back that bank loan. She'd had to give up her car and move to a smaller

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

apartment. Her salary isn't very large, you know. Her father couldn't help; Kol's never been able to handle money either, so he's got everything tied up in annuities and trusts. He's retired, of course. He was an engineer like his brother, only not nearly as successful. That pollen counter outside Ralph's window was Kol's idea, you know. In fact, the device is his prototype. He sold the design to Ralph for next to nothing, poor old goof. Though Ralph did say it needed considerable work."

"Did the device do what it was supposed to do?" asked Nygaard.

"I don't know. Kol was over tinkering with it a few days before Ralph died. I think he was hoping Ralph would let him buy back a half interest in it or something."

"If Kol is so bad with money, why aren't you executor?"

"Why, because I'm a woman!" She chuckled dryly. "Ralph always suspected I had a secret partner, male, who helped me with my business; he simply couldn't believe a female was capable of adding a column of figures and getting the same answer twice. He thought Anora's fiscal problems arose out of her sex, but I think it was because she was a Bjornlund."

"But Ralph could handle money, right?"

"No, not really. He had several very basic patents in clean room technology, and with the income they generated, it didn't matter if he occasionally invested in bad stocks or real estate that turned out to be desert or swamp."

"Do you think Anora was really on the verge of makir up that quarrel?"

"Possibly. She came crying to me about it, and together we worked out the idea of a handmade gift. Ralph liked women who baked cookies or sewed dresses—he put up with me because he considered me at bottom only a fancy sort of flower arranger—and I suggested she knit something for him. She was very grateful for my help, and even brought the sweater to me for approval before she sent it. It was a lovely thing, beautifully done. Ralph was wearing it the day he died."

"So you saw it first?"

"Oh, yes. I borrowed it for a day to show a friend, hoping to generate an order. Anora still takes orders." She cocked her head and looked at him appraisingly. "You'd look nice in a Norwegian sweater, sergeant, with those big shoulders."

Nygaard grinned, abashed. "Thank you, ma'am."

He called Dr. Stark when he got back to the office. "You say you had an asthma attack when

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

you were examining Ralph Bjornlund's body?"

"An allergic reaction of some sort, yes."

"If he'd brushed up against something full of pollen while out in his yard, could that have set off a reaction in you?"

"Yes; in fact, that's what I think happened."

"What happened to the clothes he was wearing when you found him?"

"I don't know, Thor. He didn't end up in my autopsy room, remember? Call Steinkel's, they took him away."

Nygaard called the Steinkel Funeral Home and asked Mr. Steinkel, "What happened to the clothes the late Ralph Bjornlund was wearing when he died? Was he cremated in them?"

Steinkel said, faintly shocked, "No, of course not. We put him into one of our special ultralight suits and featherweight slumber shoes for visitation, and he was cremated in those. The clothing he was wearing at the time of his demise was returned to Mr. Kol Bjornlund along with the cremains."

"Thank you, sir," Nygaard said, and went to tell Hafner, "I think I've got it."

But Jack didn't have time for talk. He had nabbed the Geirson burglar a few hours earlier, and was up to his ears in paperwork, preparing the file for the county prosecutor.

"His clothing? Well, I don't know. Wait, yes, I do. It's at the house. Why?" Kol's condor face was suspicious.

"I'd like it subjected to certain tests by our forensics lab," said Nygaard.

"What kind of tests?"

"Nothing that will harm the clothing, I promise. I want to see if we can prove your brother took a walk in his garden the morning of his death."

"Chris, what would happen if someone dusted pollen all over a sweater before presenting it to you as a gift?"

"I'd burn it," said Dr. Stark.

"No, suppose you didn't know he'd done it?"

"It wouldn't take me long to find out; I'd start wheezing and choking."

"And if you had a weak heart?"

"What are you getting at?"

"Here's the sweater Ralph Bjornlund was wearing when he died. Can you check it for pollen?"

"Right now?"

"Yes, right now. While I look over your shoulder." Nygaard had an intense way about him when hot on some trail; Stark sighed and unfolded the sweater. He went to his desk, opened a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

drawer and shut it again, opened another, and shut it. "I'm out of Scotch tape."

"What do you want tape for?"

"To lift particles of dust or pollen off the sweater. Wait here, I'll go borrow some."

"Can't you just pull out a few fibers and look at them under a microscope?" Nygaard asked impatiently.

Stark sighed again and went to a counter cluttered with equipment, including two microscopes. He used a pair of tweezers to pull loose some fibers from the sweater and teased them onto a slide. The slide was put under a microscope and a strong light turned on. Stark bent and looked. He shifted the slide's position a time or two, then straightened. "No pollen I can see," he reported.

"Try another sample, up near the neckline, in front." In his mind's eye Nygaard could see Helga in her greenhouse, and he smelled murder.

Stark repeated his procedure with the tweezers and bent again over the microscope. "No, no pollen here, either. Look, I've got some other things to—to do—arou—ACHOO!"

"There, see?" said Nygaard. "Look again."

Stark blew his nose and tried again. Nothing.

"But you're having a reaction, aren't you?"

"So?" said Stark thickly. "I'm allergic to other things, you know."

"Like what?"

"Cats. Eggs. Gold."

A new image rose up in Nygaard's mind. "What's that sweater made of?"

"Couple of things. Some artificial fiber and something natural, too. I saw it in the second sample, from the gray section."

"Wool, maybe?"

"Huh-uh, I don't think so. Anyway, wool makes me itch, not sneeze. Lemme look again."

The second slide was put onto a different microscope, one with two stages, and a selection of sample fibers was tried on the other stage. "Cat," said Stark a few minutes later. "Well, by God," he added, turning to stare at Nygaard. "That's wha—wha—ACHOO!"

"She was getting a cool quarter million by the terms of the current will," said Nygaard. "More than enough to pay off the loan and try again with another shop. It might have taken months to conclude the making-up process with her uncle, with no guarantee there wouldn't immediately be another quarrel—or that he would favor her over her father in any future will. She was in serious financial difficulty; she needed the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

money now. And being number two was safer. I was looking long and hard at Helga simply because she had the most to gain by the current will."

"How come Ralph didn't see cat hairs all over his new sweater? Surely he knew Anora had a cat; I'd've thought he'd look for them," said Hafner.

"They weren't on the surface," said Nygaard. "They were the gray pattern. She saved combings from her cat, spun them into yarn, and knitted the yarn into the sweater. Then she went to Helga and helped her suggest that a handmade gift might soften her old uncle's heart."

"Can you do that with cat hair—turn it into yarn?"

"Oh, yes; there was a fad for it for a while among weavers, saving pet hair and turning it into hats and sweaters. I found an article about it in a craft magazine Anora had saved."

"She give you any problem about a search?"

"No, once I told her she was under arrest she seemed relieved, and barely waited until I finished warning her before she told me all about it. She was pretty proud of her plan—and it was slick, you know."

"Slick ladies with her moral sense belong in jail," said Hafner dryly.

"I agree; I hope she gets my sweater finished before she comes to trial," said Nygaard.

"Sweater? You're not letting her—" began Hafner, and stopped, too indignant to continue.

"Why not? I'm not allergic to anything. It was Judy's idea. She's paying for it, she says it's my birthday present. It'll be gray, with a cream and red starburst pattern." He wrapped a big paw around his coffee mug and took a sip, thinking. "You know, after the trial I may order one for Judy, and maybe one for Eric, for Christmas. And when the new one starts to walk, we'll get one for her. Or him. Because, come to think of it, I'll know where to send the order—and she'll be there a long, long time."

Hafner stared at his partner. "You are a looney tune, you know that?"

"You think so? You didn't see the sweater she knitted for her uncle, Jack. She's a talented lady. And like you pointed out with Eric's fish, it will help to have something to point to when I tell this story to my friends in years to come. It may even become an heirloom."

Hafner snorted. "Hair-loom, you mean!"

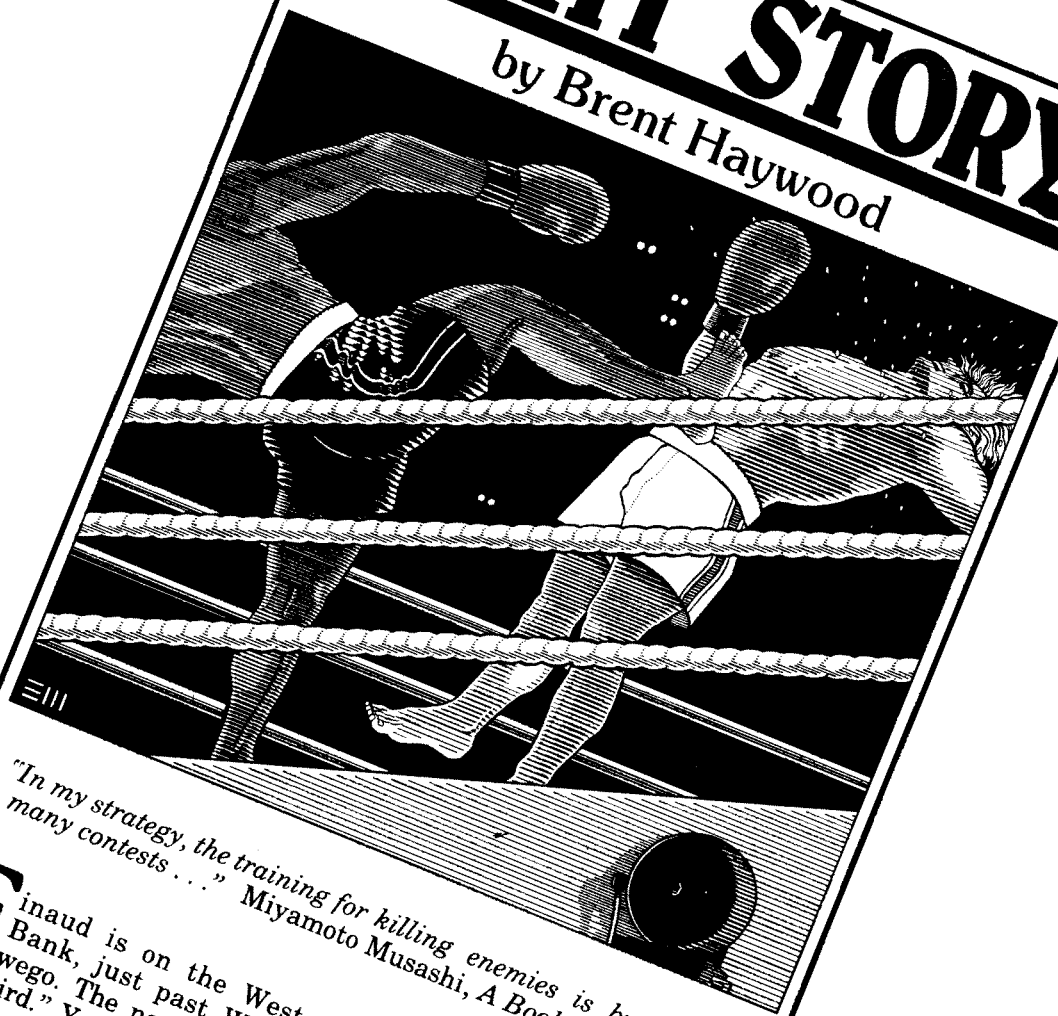
"Uff da!" groaned Nygaard, and began to laugh.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FICTION

FIGHT STORY

by Brent Haywood



"In my strategy, the training for killing enemies is by way of many contests . . ." Miyamoto Musashi, *A Book of Five Rings*

Finaud is on the West Bank, just past Westwego. The name means "wily bird." You can cross the Huey Long Bridge to get there from New Orleans and it only takes about twenty minutes, but no one ever bothers. I go over there once a month or so, for the fights.

Illustration by Eric Marcus

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It's kick boxing, full contact karate. It's usually not great fighting. The first few matches on the card are three-rounders featuring guys who look like they took up karate to keep from getting beaten up back in the seventh grade. They don't hurt each other much, and the money they win probably doesn't cover their gas expenses from Harahan or Chalmette or wherever they come from. You have to give them credit, though. They try.

A friend of mine did better. He didn't get rich at it—he worked the stockroom at D.H. Holmes—but the fight posters listed him as Jimmy "Slick" Clayton. The "Slick" was from the way he kept his head shaved and smooth, Marvin Hagler style. It looked like a chocolate bowling ball. He was a light-heavyweight, ranked sixth or eighth, depending on which fight magazine you read. He had trouble getting matches with name fighters because of his left hand. Nobody likes to fight a southpaw—they fight backwards. Anything can happen.

Anyway, he called me one afternoon, just as I was waking up. He had a quick, chattering way of talking, with lots of extra words. If you picked up one word out of three, you had a pretty good idea what he was trying to say, but the extra words were important. There was a rhythm to his speech. It wasn't exactly poetry, but you got to like it:

"Hey, dis Mike? Hey, you workin' tonight? Hey, what about, you workin', bra? What hey, what *hey?"*

"Not till midnight, Jimmy, what's up?"

"Oh, man, listen now. Listen what I'm tellin' you, bra, listen what I'm *say*in'. Rico *fightin'* tonight, see what I'm tellin' you, Rico fightin' a kid out of Shreveport, ranked third, see? Third ranked, third *ranked!* You gonna come out, bra?"

"Jimmy, how can you talk so fast when it's this hot out?" My window fan was doing nothing to dry the sweat that dripped into my eyes.

"Oh, Mike, it ain't that hot. This September! Summer over! Hey, listen, Mike, listen what I'm sayin'. This guy from Shreveport, he third ranked! This Rico's big chance, understand what I'm sayin'? Third ranked, bra! Gonna be a good fight, you gonna come?"

I said I'd be there and got off the phone. Rico was Ricardo "Kid Hombre" Fuentes. I didn't know him as well as I knew Jimmy, but I'd met him and seen him fight a few times, a half Philippine, half Puerto Rican kid with the fastest hands and feet I'd ever seen. His only problem was his tendency to flake outside the ring, to think

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with those hands and feet instead of his unusually hard head. When that happened he'd leave a trail of empty bottles and fallen bullies that led clear across the parish and ended up in the drunk tank.

It was eight thirty when I pulled into the lot at the Finaud V.F.W. hall. My old Plymouth Valiant looked out of place with all the pickup trucks and Trans-Ams. The fight poster by the front door had pictures of Rico and his opponent for the night, Kelly "Killer Bee" Costin. I bought my ticket and went in.

There were still some empty chairs in the big hall, but the people milling around or standing at the bar would more than fill them. It was the usual West Bank fight crowd, cowboy boots and plastic mesh caps on the men, polyester and piled hair on the women. In the ring a pudgy, redheaded kid was doing his best to catch punches and kicks a tall skinny kid was having trouble throwing. It was thirsty work, watching two people try so hard to do so little. I made my way through the crowd to the bar.

An old guy with a Penrod Drilling insignia on his cap served me a beer, and I looked around the room for Jimmy. I finally spotted him at the opposite corner, near the fighters' dressing room, talking to a man I'd never seen before and didn't like on sight. He had the half-scared, half-belligerent look of the smalltime loser. He might have been hard once, and maybe he could still throw a punch, but he probably wouldn't unless somebody was holding his target for him. A gut hung out the front of his red ersatz silk jacket. He had moved on by the time I got across the room, and that was fine with me.

Jimmy's mouth was going full tilt, as usual.

"Hey Mike, hey Mike! What it is, bra, what it *is?*"

"Where y'at, Jimmy?"

"All right, all *right!* Man, wait till you see Rico! Wait un*til* you see Rico, bra, he bad! He lookin' *bad!*"

"He been sober?"

"Oh, man! Wait *un*-til you see, bra, jus *wait!* The Meatball got the Kid in shape, bra, the Meatball keepin' him in *line!*"

"Meatball?"

"Oh, yeh! Meatball! Oooo, dat right! You don't know about the *changes!* Man, *changes* been happenin', bra, *changes!* Oooo, yeh. We gots Mr. *Cantrell,* bra, Mr. Can-*trell!*"

"Cantrell?"

"Yeh-you-right! Mr. *Can*-trell. He the new promoter, bra, and he *gots* the stuff. He *gots* it! Man, we talkin' 'bout more money, we talkin' 'bout fights with contenders, bra, we talkin' 'bout travel expenses—he gots it all! *Man!* He even gots us *in-*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

surance! In-*sur*-ance! I get cut or dropped and need a doctor, that insurance pays for it! Protection, man, pro-tec-*shun!*"

"Sounds good, Jimmy . . ."

"Oh, yeh! Like next week, bra, I'm fightin' Clint Jackson, you know, Clint *Jackson!* He fifth ranked! Fifth ranked, bra! See, I'm gettin' the fights! I beat *him,* and they *gots* to start fightin' me, bra—they *gots* to!"

"Mr. Cantrell sounds all right. He here tonight?"

"No no, he up in Shreveport, on business. He *always* on some kinda business, bra, he *all* business. He take care of business and us fighters takes care of *opponents,* op-*po*-nents."

About then a girl who had stuffed herself into shorts and a halter top hobbled by on a ridiculous pair of heels. She carried a tray full of draft beer, and I traded her a dollar for one. She hobbled on. It was a hell of a way to make a living.

In the ring, the referee was standing between the two fighters, holding a wrist in each hand while the judge's scores were read. Both fighters were exhausted, and neither looked at all beaten up. It was a split decision in favor of the tall skinny kid.

Rico would be fighting in twenty minutes or so. Jimmy went to talk with a girl he'd just noticed, and I made my way back to the bar. The announcer, a honey-voiced black man whom every one called Reno for some reason, was giving the crowd the rundown on upcoming fights.

The draft beer I'd just bought was lukewarm, so I dumped it and got a cold bottle. I also ordered a hamburger, and while I waited for the microwave to heat it, I noticed the phone. It was a new one, installed on a wall just beyond the far end of the bar. A hand-written sign over it said, "Business phone, three minute limit." It was getting a lot of use, and none of the calls was taking anything like three minutes. I got my burger and wandered over there, just for the hell of it.

I didn't get close enough to hear what anyone was saying, but while I ate my hamburger seven guys made quick calls. I recognized one, the fat loser in the ersatz silk. I'd seen him talking to Jimmy earlier, and now I saw the back of his jacket. Gold letters stood out against the red: "Ricardo *Kid Hombre* Fuentes." I wasn't close enough to hear what he said.

The folding chairs were filling and I let them fill; I never could watch a good fight sitting down. I crossed the room and found myself a spot against the wall, not far from Rico's corner. Kelly Costin was already in the ring, dancing and throwing punches for the crowd. He looked

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as Irish as his name, and he moved more like a slugger than a kick boxer. His face showed experience—he looked like he could take a punch, and had. He'd probably started out as a boxer, and later learned enough karate to get in the eight kicks per round required by kick boxing rules. He wasn't young.

Jimmy joined me. I said, "Slick, this guy might be tough. I bet he can take a punch."

"Oh man! Look at his face, look *at* it! He taken too many, bra, too many. He an old man!"

"Experience counts."

"Sho! But looks like the only experience he gots is experience bein' hit!"

Our talk went on like that until Rico came out of the locker room and made his way through the crowd to the ring. He was thinner than the Irish pug, and the gloves looked fat and strange at the end of his skinny arms. His face was set and hard looking, but not beat up. He wore a shiny red robe draped over his bony shoulders. Two men trailed him, wearing jackets of the same material. I'd seen one of them twice before, talking with Jimmy and then talking on the phone. I had a feeling I knew who he was, but I asked anyway. "Slick—who's the slob in the red jacket?"

"Oh man! That's the Meatball, bra, the Meatball. He may be a slob, but he sho know about fighters. He trainin' the Kid, bra, trainin' him *good!*"

"How'd Rico meet this guy?"

"Mr. Cantrell introduce them, bra, he work for Mr. C. He gonna work my corner next week."

Reno introduced the fighters, and Rico shed his robe to let fly with a couple of quick combinations. His hands and feet seemed to vanish into the air around him. The crowd liked it, and let him know. Jimmy let him know, too: "Go on, Kid, go *on!*" He was standing next to me, but his feet were in the ring with the Kid, doing a quick fighter's shuffle. "Oh, *man,* he bad! He *bad!* Check them *hands,* bra, check them *hands!*"

The fighters met in the center of the ring for their instructions, touched gloves, and returned to their corners. The bell started the round.

The Kid threw two quick kicks, and Costin parried them, one with a glove and one with a kick of his own. The fighters circled, tentative. Rico was light on his feet, Costin was plodding and steady—he moved like a heavy man. Thirty seconds into the round, the Kid let loose with a combination, a quick flurry of punches, followed by a spinning kick. The punches landed, but not well, and the kick left him open. Costin landed a right. The Kid lost his balance but caught it again. I'd never

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seen the Kid hit so early in a fight before. He was too fast—only when he got tired, when he was out of shape and a few rounds into it—did fighters get to him. It didn't make sense. Jimmy was silent next to me.

The Kid shook off the punch and circled to his right, letting Costin stalk him. The Killer Bee threw three or four tentative kicks at nothing in particular, clearly trying to get his required kicks out of the way so he could concentrate on his hands. Rico danced and circled, clearing his head.

Halfway into the round he tried the same combination, this time throwing in a straight kick in the beginning and another one, high and sharp, before the spinning roundhouse kick. Costin took the blows on his gloves and forearms, and when Ricardo's head came around, following his swinging leg, Costin caught him with the same right. The sound of the punch filled the room, and the crowd came to its feet as Rico went down. Costin had a punch, but it was as slow as it was solid. I couldn't figure how he was getting to the Kid.

"Man, I don't like this." Jimmy's voice was steady and even. The chatter was gone. "Man, I don't like this at all."

Rico didn't seem to like it, either. A smart fighter waits for the referee to count eight or nine before he gets to his feet. It gives him rest, quiets his ringing ears. The Kid was off the mat in two, and he came up mad. Costin's eyes showed shock. He should have been closing in for the finish. Instead, he was forced to back away, chin tucked to his chest. The Kid came at him with everything; quick lefts, blasting rights, and kicks that seemed to come from nowhere. Costin's head was buried, so the Kid hit his forearms, a steady stream of blows that would tire the Irish, lower his guard and weaken his punch. After thirty seconds of this, Costin tried a few punches of his own—but every time he extended an arm, the Kid penetrated. Costin backed off. His corner was yelling, *"Kick!"*—he was still short of the required eight. He tossed out a couple of weak legs that the Kid parried without problem, waiting. Costin tried a side kick, and the Kid's timing was perfect. He began to spin just as Costin's foot came off the floor. It was the same roundhouse motion that had left him open to the Irish twice before. Costin's kick went up, and the Kid's went around. Costin's leg came down and his head came forward. The Kid's foot was there to meet it. The Killer Bee landed hard.

Jimmy was back to his high

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

speed chatter: "Oh, *man!* Did you see that, did you *see!* He sharp, he sharp!"

I couldn't hear the referee's count because of the crowd, but I could see his moving hand. The bell saved the Irish on number five.

"The Kid should have waited out the count when he was down, Slick, collected himself . . ."

"Oh, *Mike,* he ain't that kind of fighter. The Kid is *street,* he *street.* You think they let you take an eight count in the streets? Man, that's just *instinct!* He probably don't even remember gettin' to his feet, bra, he like that. He *street!"*

Round two was like the second half of round one, except the Kid was calm, methodical. He threw just as many punches and they were just as fast, but more of them were getting through. His kicks were snappy and accurate. Costin's arms weakened, his guard dropped. His chin was still tight to his chest, except when the Kid knocked it back with a glancing kick to set it up for the right to follow. Costin began to circle to his own right to keep away from the Kid's right hand, but the Kid was relentless. A minute and a half into the round, the Irish got lucky with his left, and that set the Kid off. The combination that followed was a fighter's dream, beautiful, fast, and deadly, a storm of kicks and punches ending with a swinging roundhouse kick that only caught Costin standing because it was so fast—the Irish was already going down. The Kid seemed to rejoice in using that move, the one that had given him trouble in the first round. Kelly Costin took the ten count while the Kid held his gloves in the air. They looked like brown balloons trying to float him away.

Reno announced the result, and I wondered what had happened to the Kid's corner men. I didn't see them anywhere. Finally I picked out the one Jimmy called Meatball. His red jacket made him hard to miss. He was on the phone again.

Jimmy and I made our way through the mob to Rico, who was just climbing out of the ring. The Kid hugged Jimmy and politely shook my hand with his two gloves. Up close he didn't look nearly as dangerous as he had been a few minutes before in the ring. His eyes glowed with fanatic joy: winning. Jimmy and the Kid talked a little about the fight, and then Jimmy accepted my offer of a ride home.

I dodged a pickup that was fishtailing out of the parking lot and made my way through the traffic to the West Bank Expressway. Jimmy lives in Algiers with his mother. It's not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out of the way if I'm going to work—I just take the Mississippi River Bridge instead of the Huey Long. Jimmy spent the ride reconstructing the fight for me. He had a great memory for what happens in a ring; lightning fast combinations were like slow dancing to him. He explained things the Kid had done right, and things the Kid had tried and got lucky on; he knew when Costin had been good and when he'd been lucky, and when he'd been very good but not good enough for the Kid. The only thing he couldn't explain, to himself or to me, was the first minute and a half of the first round. The Kid had been hit hard twice, and he'd left his feet one of those times. It didn't look right when you put it next to the rest of the fight.

In Old Algiers, tiny, well-kept gardens still front rows of double shotgun houses. Jimmy invited me in. Moonlight made a silhouette of the River Bridge passing overhead, and I could hear the bridge traffic blending with the hum of streetlamps. Jimmy's mother never cared for the bridge. She still takes the Algiers Ferry across the river to work every morning, just as she did before the bridge was built. She seemed glad to see me: "You want a cold beer, baby?"

"Thanks, Mrs. Clayton, I will."

"Good. Jimmy don't drink it, but I keeps some around the house anyway. I don't mind taking a beer from time to time, when I gets home from work. It calms my nerves." She brought me a can and a glass.

"Thank you, ma'am. You're not having one?"

"Oh, no, Mike. My nerves is all right today. Sit down, honey, sit down."

I lowered myself into the sofa, poured beer, and fitted the can into a coaster on the coffee table. Jimmy went off into another part of the house.

"You still doin' that security work, Mike?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Just where is that—I know you tol' me, but it slips my mind."

"Ten-eleven Poydras. The big office building."

"That's right, not too far from the Sheraton. I worked in the Sheraton some years ago . . ."

Jimmy came back in, carrying a thin, square book. "Mama, you want something while I'm up? Coke or something?"

"No, thank you, baby, I'm doin' just fine."

"Mike, look. I want to show you this book I been readin'. It's a very, very *heavy* book, bra, a very *important* book."

"Yeah? Let me see."

The book was called *A Book of Five Rings* and was written by a Miyamoto Musashi. I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

turned through it. It seemed to be a sort of instruction book for kendo, the Japanese art of sword fighting. "You taking kendo, Slick?"

"Oh no, man. This Musashi was the greatest kendo master of all time—and he lived in the sixteen hundreds—but the book ain't about sword fighting, it's about *every* kind of fighting. He wrote it just before he died, bra, for a student of his, and it's all about *strategy,* about how the most important thing—see, technique and training and all is important—but the most *important* thing is your way of life, the way you look at the world, bra. That's what this book's about, bra, the *Way.* I'm still readin' it, bra; I've read it about five times, but I'm still readin' it. It's very, very profound."

"I'd like to look at it sometime."

"Sure, bra, *sure.* I'll loan you it, but not until after this week. I want to be studyin' all week, bra, until my fight, you know."

"Good. You feel ready?"

Mrs. Clayton broke in. "Child! Is he *ready!* Except for work, that boy been eatin' and sleepin' and fightin'. That's *all!* Every time I turn around that boy doin' pushups or situps or some other exercise, or shadow boxin'. Lord, it gets on these old nerves!"

Jimmy and I laughed and I looked at my watch. It was getting late, and I had to be at work in half an hour. I made my excuses, got to my feet, and said my goodbyes.

I felt good driving across the bridge to work. Seeing Jimmy and his mother always made me feel good, made me feel like there were still people *trying* in the world. I don't know how hard I was trying, but I got through a night of watching an empty office building about the way I usually do—without incident.

At eight I pointed the Valiant up St. Charles Avenue, going home while everyone else in town was going to work. It was a hot, misty, sleepy morning. For some reason I kept thinking about Rico's fight. There was something strange—maybe even wrong—about the first round, but I couldn't put my finger on it. I decided I was just tired. My bed felt good.

I didn't hear from Jimmy all during the next week. I passed muggy nights working and sweltering days sleeping or drinking beer under the ceiling fans at the Maple Leaf Bar. Even though it was late September, the tail end of summer in New Orleans, there was no break in the heat. I was wondering, as most locals do that time of year, if the heat wasn't going to last forever.

It was Friday afternoon and I was pouring my morning coffee when Jimmy called. At first

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

his voice was chattering nonsense, but something in the rhythm of it let me know that what he was saying was urgent. My first sip of dark roast made his voice clearer. Another sip sent waves of wakefulness up my spine.

"Wait a second, Jimmy, wait a sec. You're gonna have to say it all again. I'm just waking up."

He took a deep breath. "All right, bra, all right. Listen what I'm sayin', listen what I'm gonna tell you. Just listen, now, *listen.* Remember how the Kid looked so bad at the beginning of that fight? Remember how it seemed so *weird?* Man, that fight was *suppose* to be *fixed. Fixed!* Hear what I'm sayin'? Rico was suppose to *lose!*"

"How'd you find this out?"

"I *finally* found Rico, that's how. He *vanish* that night, Mike. Nobody seen him for *days.* I axed around at some his bars, but I was always a step *behind* him. He finally turned up clean over in Port Sulfur! He called Mama and got her on her day off—I was at work—but when I got off, I borrowed a car and got him. They had him in jail, and I think they was glad to get rid of him."

"Drunk?"

"Not when I got him, but I guess he had been. The cell next to him was full of people he been fightin'. They all looked pretty bad. So anyway, on the ride back he gave me the story."

"Meatball?"

"That's right, bra, that's right! *Meatball.* He train Rico for two months, keepin' him sober, cleanin' up his act—an' then he tells the Kid to take a dive! That's *cold!* Told him to lose the fight or forget about ever fightin' again in the South. That's what he said, Mike! Oh, man, I can't hardly *believe* it!"

"Meatball say anything to you?"

"Nothin', Mike. But he suppose to work my corner tonight!"

"Cantrell promoted your fight tonight?"

"Yeh! He comin' down for it, too!"

"Meatball's probably gonna be talkin' to you. What's his real name, anyway?"

"Artie Martins. But every one calls him the Meatball. Mike, what I'm gonna do? What if he tells me to fix the fight?"

I looked at the bottom of my empty coffee cup. Jimmy was silent on the other end of the line, waiting. Finally, I said, "I don't know, Jimmy. I don't know who these people are. I don't know what to tell you."

"Man, I ain't gonna throw no fight."

"Let me call around and see what I can find out."

"I ain't gonna do it, Mike, I ain't gonna do it."

"I didn't figure you would,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Jimmy. Let me see if I can find out who you're dealing with."

"How you gonna do that?"

"I have a friend over at one of the papers. I'll see what he can dig up."

"All right, bra, I *really* appreciate that. But I'll tell you right now, I ain't gonna fix no fight. No way, bra, no *way!*"

"Listen, I'll come over there early tonight and tell you what I find out."

I hung up the phone and poured another cup of coffee. Then I called one of the weeklies and left a message for Jack Lucas. Jack got back to me in half an hour.

"Where y'at, Mike?"

"Nothin' to it, Jack. Things busy down at the newsroom?"

"Not so's you'd notice."

"Good. I need you to do some checking for me. A fight promoter out of Shreveport named Cantrell and a smalltime thug named Artie Martins. They call the thug Meatball."

"No sweat, Mike, I'll make some calls. What's it about?"

"I'm not sure yet. This Cantrell is promoting fights over in Finaud, on the West Bank. Karate. Apparently he tried to make a friend of mine play sap."

"Yeah? They gamble on that stuff?"

"You got me. I did notice a phone getting a lot of use."

"I'll check. You home?"

"Either here or up the street."

"Right."

Up the street meant the Maple Leaf, a couple of blocks away. My coffee was tasting burnt and my window fan was being its usual ineffectual self, so I decided to sample the Maple Leaf's beer. I picked up a paper on the way.

Maybe an hour passed; I was in the middle of the comics and my second cold one when the bartender waved me to the phone.

Jack's voice said, "Starting a little early, aren't you, Mike?"

"Get you," I said. "In your air-conditioned office."

"Right. Listen, it took a while but I got something on your boys."

"I'm listening."

"Cantrell is Leo Cantrell, a smalltime gambler who doesn't like to bet when there's a chance to lose. He goes way back. There was a scandal about fifteen years ago, a high school football game—you know how they like their football in north Louisiana. Anyway, he shook down a few players, looking to shave points, only it didn't work. A sophomore defensive end had the game of his life and scored twice on interceptions. The players in on the fix turned on the kid, and the story got out. They never really got Cantrell, and the storm finally blew over. Cantrell went into champion-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ship wrestling, managing a few boys, promoting matches, the usual chase-around stuff. He got a reputation for being dishonest but not for being very good at it. He's got some tenuous connections in medium-high places that keep him out of trouble as long as the trouble isn't too bad."

"Jesus, Jack, where'd you get all this?"

"Old newspaper hack up in Shreveport. He don't write much any more—occasional obit—but he's got a great memory. Hey, listen—there's more. In the last couple of years he's branched out—Cantrell, that is—into kick boxing, the karate stuff you mentioned. Word is, he handles his fighters just like his wrestlers, tells them when to win and when not to. It's all talk, but it seems to fit."

"I guess it does . . ."

"One more thing—and I like this touch. There're always a few gofers around Cantrell, the types you'd expect. Nobody ever knows their names or cares to. But I did find out something. My old friend up north remembered the names of the kids in the football scandal. One of the players in on the fix was a kid named Arthur Martins."

"The Meatball!"

"Sounds like it. All this do you any good?"

"Maybe so, Jack. You say Cantrell is connected. Anything in our neighborhood, or is it all up north?"

"All my friend knew about was up around Shreveport, but you never know. Money talks, even if north Louisiana dirt doesn't usually mix with the swamp mud we have down here."

"Cute line. You ought to write for the papers. Listen, you want to join me at the fights tonight?"

"Sorry, Mike, I can't. Got a date."

"For true? Anyone I know?"

"I doubt it, Mike. In fact, I'm sure you don't."

"How's that?"

"She's a female of our own species."

"Then save the wit for her—she'll think you're deep."

"Sure, Mike. And let me know if this turns into anything I can use."

"Right, Jack. Thanks." I hung up the phone and got back under the ceiling fan with my beer.

I caught the tail end of the evening traffic over the Huey Long Bridge and got into Finaud plenty early—they were still setting up the ring. I found Jimmy in a faraway back corner, sitting by himself. He had his eyes closed, and at first I thought he was asleep, but when I said "Jimmy" softly, he opened his eyes and got to his feet.

"Hey, Mike, what's hap-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

penin'? Thanks for comin', bra, thanks for comin' out. How you doin'?"

"I'm fine, Jimmy, how do *you* feel?"

"Ready, *ready!* I'm good, baby, I'm feelin' good!"

"You takin' a little nap back here?"

"Oh, no, man. I been *meditating*. You remember that book I showed you? It ain't a book you can just *read,* man. You gots to *study* it, bra, and meditate on what it says. Ain't no shortcuts, man, you gots to *live* the Way of Strategy."

"Sounds kind of cultish or something."

"Oh, no, bra, this ain't like that. This is personal. It ain't something you join. It's just a way of *doin'* things, a way of lookin' at the *world*. Say, Mike, you call that friend of yours?"

"I sure did. You see the Meatball yet?"

"No, Mike, he ain't here yet. Mr. Cantrell neither. What you find out?"

So I told him the story. He listened all the way through and nodded his head a couple of times. When I finished, he nodded his head again.

"I guess they bad people," he said. "But I can't do nothin' about that. I'm just gonna do what I gotta do."

"What's that?"

"Mike, you know what I gotta do. I gotta *fight.*"

"Be careful," I said. I don't know why I said it. It sounded stupid as soon as it got out of my mouth. Jimmy smiled.

"Yeah," he said, "I'll be careful. Now I gots to get myself ready. I'll see you in a while."

"You need a ride someplace?" It was still a couple of hours before he'd be fighting.

"No, bra, that's all right. I'm just gonna take me a walk over by the levee. Make my head clear on all this mess."

"All right."

Jimmy went out a side door, and I wandered over to where they were setting up the ring. It was nearly ready, and a couple of high school kids were setting up folding chairs. There was still nearly an hour before the first fight. I decided to look for something to eat.

Not far up the main drag I found a lunch and dinner place called Guidry's. The guy who ladled me up a bowl of andouille and chicken gumbo and picked me out a couple of boiled crabs was no more Cajun than I am, but you couldn't tell it from his cooking. I put a hot cup of coffee on top of it and made my way back to the V.F.W. hall. The first fight had already started. It wasn't much to look at, so I didn't.

I found a spot at the bar, not far from the new pay phone. I didn't watch it, exactly, but I didn't ignore it, either. Ma Bell

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wasn't losing any money on her investment. Farther down the bar I picked out a guy who didn't fit into the crowd. His striped sports jacket would have been more at home at the racetrack. He was a big enough man, but he had the worn look that a lot of full-time gamblers wear. He had plenty of hair, but it wasn't quite clean and you'd be hard put to name the color. When he picked up his drink, a gold chain showed on his wrist next to an oversized cufflink, but the shirt wasn't any cleaner than the hair. He wasn't down and out, he was just preoccupied, and had been for years. I picked him for Lou Cantrell, and when the Meatball joined him a few minutes later, I knew I was right. With Cantrell, Meatball had the idiotic nodding manner of a man who might have thought for himself once, but only until someone told him not to.

I was about to find another place to nurse my beer when Jimmy came in. I caught his eye and he waved. There was a good crowd by now, and more than a few people called his name or shook his hand, wishing him luck. Jimmy made his way through his fans to Meatball and Cantrell. I couldn't hear what was said, but Cantrell held out his hand and Jimmy ignored it. Then Meatball put his arm over Jimmy's shoulders and led him toward the back—only he wasn't really leading. Jimmy was walking toward the back and seemed content to let the Meatball hover around him. I went that way myself.

Halfway through the big hall I passed Meatball. He was going back to the bar, and without Jimmy. He didn't look angry—just startled and confused, and maybe a little worried.

I found Jimmy in the fighters' dressing room, or what passed for it. It wasn't more than a large bathroom with a couple of folding chairs.

"Hey, Mike," he said, "you feel like workin' my corner?"

"Sure, Jimmy, but I don't have a kit . . ."

"I brought my own stuff. I figured I'd be needin' it."

Jimmy's eyes were far away and his voice sounded oddly *content*. He always got that way before a fight—it meant he was ready—but I couldn't help asking, "You all right, Slick?"

"Just fine, bra, never better."

"Okay. Where's your stuff?"

"Out behind the bar. Ask Alton for it. The old guy."

I went out to get the bag and ran into Rico at the bar. I was glad to see he was sober—I'd helped out in Jimmy's corner before, but never by myself.

"Hey, Mike," he said. "Where's Jimmy at?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"In the back, Rico. You want to work his corner tonight?"

The Kid seemed more than a little nervous. "You seen Meatball around?"

"He was here earlier." I looked around the place and couldn't find Meatball or Cantrell in the crowd. "I think he and his boss man have split, Rico."

"Jimmy tell you what's been happenin'?"

"Yeah. He's gonna fight."

"I'll work his corner, but I sure hope he knows what he's doin'."

The old bartender in the Penrod cap brought the bag, and Rico and I went to get Jimmy ready. The Kid did most of it. I just handed him tape and rubdown oil and Vaseline for under Jimmy's eyes.

Jimmy's opponent, Clint Jackson out of Shreveport, was getting the same treatment in the same room. Jimmy spoke to him: "That's a long ride down here from Shreveport, ain't that right, *Clint?*" He made the man's name sound like it was fouling his mouth. Jackson said nothing. Jimmy continued, "Well, *Clint,* I jus' hope you came *all* that way knowin' you was gonna have to *fight.*" Jackson smiled, like he knew nothing of the sort. "Jus' fair warning, *Clint.* Fair warning."

"Be cool," Rico said, under his breath.

Clint Jackson went out first. When he got settled into his corner, Jimmy made his entrance. The crowd loved him. The Kid and I followed him out—I was carrying the corner gear—and the cheering surrounded us. Jimmy never smiled. He just held his gloves in the air and looked straight ahead, acknowledging the crowd with his hands while his mind was on the fight ahead.

Reno introduced the fighters, and Jackson got polite applause. The cheering continued for Jimmy, and he still didn't look around him—just held those big gloves up for everyone to see and understand. I took Jimmy's robe. The Kid said something into his ear that I couldn't hear, the fighters got their instructions from the referee, and then it started.

It started fast. Jackson threw a couple of kicks—nothing real strong. It was more like sparring, feeling Jimmy out. Jimmy didn't wait to be felt out. He moved in and dropped him with a left.

Jackson wasn't hurt, but he was surprised. Jimmy backed off and motioned with his gloves for Jackson to get up. Jackson looked around—I wondered if he was looking for Lou Cantrell. He got to his feet on the eight count, and Jimmy moved in and dropped him a second time with the same left. He must have pulled the punch—it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

was a clean shot that should have put Jackson out. The fighter from Shreveport must have thought Jimmy was still taking a dive or he never would have left himself open that way. Now he was on the mat for the second time in thirty seconds, with Jimmy still motioning for him to get up and fight. Something was dawning on him. This time he got up ready.

His defenses closed up. He circled to his own left and kept his right high. Jimmy didn't pull his next left-hand punch, but he didn't land it, either. Jackson popped him with a left of his own, and the men began to fight for real.

Jackson kept circling away from Jimmy's left, so Jimmy spun and grazed him with a high left foot that Jackson backed into. They went into a clinch, and the referee broke them. Jackson moved in with an attack of his own that ended in another clinch. He circled away again, and Jimmy caught him with a left foot that sent him into the ropes. Jackson kicked his way out, and the bell found the fighters mixing it in the center.

I took Jimmy's mouth guard, passed him the water bottle, and held the bucket so he could spit. The Kid talked: "He's smart, Slick, real smart. He knows how to stay away from your left, but it puts him on the run to do it. Keep him running, run him down, baby, run him down. Use your legs. Watch his right, watch his right. It don't *look* strong, but it's sneaky. Be cool, Slick, use your head. *Hurt* him."

Jimmy nodded through all this. I gave him back his mouth guard and he closed his eyes. The Kid kept talking, but the nodding stopped. When Jimmy opened his eyes—it might have been ten seconds later—he smiled. It was in his eyes more than on his mouth, but you could see it if you looked. He was on his feet for the bell.

Jackson moved on him right away, but Jimmy's left put him back on the defensive. He backpedaled and Jimmy threw a spinning left foot, but this time Jackson stepped into it and gave Jimmy some right hand, and it was more than a sample. The chocolate bowling ball snapped back and Jimmy's legs hit the mat last. The whole ring shook. Jackson backed off and the referee started the count. Next to me, the Kid kept saying, "He's all right, he's all right," over and over but Jimmy didn't look all right.

On six Jimmy looked up, and either I'm crazy or I saw that same smile in his eyes. He was on his feet at nine, and after a look at his face, the referee waved Jackson in. The crowd was quieter than it had been

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

since before Jimmy left the dressing room. A few people called out, "Get him, Slick," or "Come on, Jimmy," but there was no conviction in their voices.

Jackson closed on him, and it was Jimmy's turn to backpedal. He did a good job of it, staying just out of the Shreveport boy's reach while he collected himself. Jackson looked good. He stayed clear of Jimmy's left and kept him moving back at the same time, waiting for the opening that would let him finish Jimmy off.

Then, with a minute left, Jimmy did something that I'd never seen a fighter do: he reversed himself. He was a lefthander who had won fights because his southpaw style played havoc with righthanded fighters. But in this fight, Jackson was controlling his left hand—so Jimmy switched. He faked a left, switched his feet, and became a mirror image of himself. Suddenly he was fighting like a righthander. It caught Jackson completely off guard. The smooth fighter from Shreveport turned into a stumbling chump. By the time he recovered, Jimmy had landed a stunning combination, a spinning right foot followed by a devastating right hand. Jackson came back with a tough right of his own, but it was too late. Jimmy seemed to flick it away with his own left foot. He followed with a right hand, and brought Jackson down with a left that sounded more like a gunshot than a punch, even over the screaming hometown mob.

There was the usual carrying on. The Kid jumped into the ring after the ten count, and Jimmy lifted him into the air. When his corner men finally got him to his feet, Jackson gave Jimmy a hug and said, "Man, I hope you know what you're doing." Jimmy just kept smiling. I got a beer and hung around for a while. Cantrell and the Meatball didn't come back around. Rico said he'd give Jimmy a ride home, so I went back across the river. I had a couple of hours before I needed to be at work, so I stopped by the Maple Leaf. I felt like telling someone about the fight.

In theory, a karate fighter is supposed to be ambidextrous. He trains to fight with both sides of his body, to "use all his weapons," is one way they put it. Even so, every fighter has a strong side, a side he favors and feels most confident with. I'd never seen a fighter switch from his strong side to his weak side before—it was a subtle and beautiful feat.

And it was lost on the barflies in the Leaf, so after an hour of trying to explain it to anyone who would listen, I gave it up.

At work the last few seconds

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the fight kept going through my head like a popular song you hear on the radio and can't shake. I even tried to duplicate Jimmy's moves in the wide, carpeted hallways of the empty office building. My own clumsiness made me appreciate Jimmy even more. The fight was still going on in my head when I crawled into bed that morning.

I don't usually remember dreams, but a phone call broke into this one so it's still clear, even now. In it, Jimmy was fighting, only it wasn't in the ring. It was a street fight, and his opponent was Lou Cantrell. The gambler would come at him, and Jimmy would send him flying with a kick. Then, while his foot was still in the air, another Cantrell would come at him from the opposite side. Jimmy would spin and knock that one back, and another one would come. It was misty nighttime in the dream, and Cantrell after Cantrell kept coming out of the mist and Jimmy kept spinning and kicking, knocking all of them back into the mist until he was just a spinning blur and the sound of his feet hitting the Cantrells was like a stick against a long picket fence.

The phone call that stopped the spinning was from Rico, and I was so glad to be out of the dream that I tried my only two words of Spanish: "Hey, *qué pasa*, Kid Hombre?"

"Oh, Mike, listen, I got bad news, Mike. Jimmy's *dead! Dead*, man! They killed him! They got him while his mama was at work . . ."

I don't know why, but I looked at the clock right then. It was two thirteen and twenty-two seconds. I said, "Tell me about it, Kid."

He did: "Oh, man, I went by to see him this morning, Mike, around ten—today's his day off, man—and I just went by to check him out, you know, maybe go for a ride or something. You know, *Saturday*, man. So I rang the bell and there was no answer, and I figure maybe he walked his mama to the ferry or something and I was gonna walk down that way and then I looked in the window, and I could see him on the *floor!* So I kicked that door down, man, and ran in and Jimmy was *dead!* There was holes all in him! He had a gun in his hand and there was blood everywhere—oh man!"

"Where are you now, Rico?"

"I'm still over here. I'm here with his mama. The police already came and took him away and everything. I'm just here with his mama. They called her and she came home from work."

"All right. I'll be right over. How is she?"

"A friend of hers is here,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mike. But she asked me to call you, you know, 'cause you was a good friend of Jimmy's."

"What did the police say? Did you tell them about the fight?"

"Oh, no, man, I was scared. I didn't know what to tell them—they say it was *suicide,* man. Suicide! Man, I *saw* him. He was *all* shot up! But I was afraid to tell them about the fight and all. I don't know what to do . . ."

"You drinkin'?"

"Oh, man, I had a couple beers is all. I ain't drunk, man."

"Listen, stay right there, Kid. I'll be over as soon as I can."

"Okay, Mike. I'll be here. Oh *man!* I wish I hadn't seen him. I'm glad his mama didn't. He looked *terrible!*"

I hung up, got a beer of my own, and called Jack Lucas at the paper.

"I've got your story, Jack," I said when I got him.

"How's that?"

"A fighter I know was told to take a dive last night. He didn't. He's dead this morning. It was made to look like a suicide, only he was shot more than once."

"Sounds like the killer was no rocket scientist. Is this the black kid in Algiers?"

"The same."

"Our West Bank man just called the story in. The police call it suicide—there's nothing about how many times he was shot. Coroner's report is still out. And nothing about any fixed fight."

"Of course there isn't. The boys who know are afraid to talk. Wouldn't *you* be afraid?" I could feel myself getting angry. "They kill off a smalltime fighter working for a fifty dollar purse, fill him *full* of lead and put a gun in his hand, and the police call it suicide. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure the odds on that one."

"Hang on, Mike, hang on . . ."

"Hang on, hell! Maybe it's a payoff and maybe it's just the usual top-flight police work that comes into play whenever a black kid catches a bullet. Either way, it stinks, and stinks bad."

"Mike, cool down . . ."

But I didn't cool down. I hung up. Then I finished my beer and lit a cigarette and got dressed. Then I drove my car to Algiers.

An elderly black lady that I didn't know answered the door. She showed me in, and Mrs. Clayton put her Bible on the coffee table and stood to embrace me. The two women held themselves with perfect grace. There were no tears. Mrs. Clayton said, "My Jimmy didn't kill himself, Mike."

"I know that," I said. She nodded, as if that was all that needed to be said.

I found Rico in the kitchen, staring at a beer can.

"Where's the Meatball?" I said. It was a demand.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

He looked up at me like I was from another planet. He hadn't heard me come in. "How'd you get here so fast?" he said. His eyes were wild.

"In a rocket," I said. "Where's the Meatball hang out?"

"Oh, yeah, man, let's get the Meatball! I come with you."

"No. You sit here. Drink if you want. Where can I find him? You trained with him for two months. Where does he drink?"

"No, I go with you, Mike, I kick his . . ."

"*No!*" I hit him on the side of the head with my open hand.

It was probably a stupid thing to do. Even sitting there drunk, he could have removed my left ear with his little toe. But he didn't. He started to cry, and said, "The Knockdown. Over by the hall."

"Good," I said. "Stay here tonight. Protect these ladies." He nodded yes and I went back out to the front room. Jimmy's mother was reading her Bible again. In the softest voice I could manage, I said, "Mrs. Clayton, if Ricardo leaves here, he's liable to get into trouble."

"I understand," she said. "He'll stay here." She stood, still holding her Bible. "Thank you for coming, Mike. Will you come to the church tomorrow?"

I nodded. "Yes, ma'am."

She showed me to the door. Then, very quietly, she said, "Do you know who did this to my son?"

I nodded again. "I'm going there now, Mrs. Clayton."

I watched a shudder pass through her. Her head turned from side to side as she closed the door.

The Knockdown must have had ten different names in the past five years. They changed the name to The Knockdown when the fights in the V.F.W. hall first got popular, maybe a year ago. It was a stupid bar, a loser's bar, with overpriced highballs and underfed exotic dancers. It was exactly the kind of place the Meatball would choose.

He was sitting at the bar by himself, right in the middle. At the far end, the daytime dancer was chatting with the bartender. They seemed to have a lot to talk about, so I let them talk.

I slid onto the barstool next to the Meatball and said, "So if it isn't the king of the saps." My voice was ugly, sneering.

Meatball looked up from his drink. He looked at me like I was crazy. Maybe I was.

"Huh?" he said.

"The king of all the saps. The greatest sap in the world. The sap of the century."

"Hey, you nuts, or what?"

"No, I'm not nuts. I just came in here to admire the king of the saps! Hey, bartender! Barkeep! Let's have some drinks!

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Let's have a round for me and the king of all the saps!"

The bartender looked annoyed, but not like this was a new experience for him. He moved down the bar and said, "What is it, pal?"

"Nothing, no big deal! I just want to buy a drink for me and the Meatball here. Whatever he wants. I'll make mine beer." I put a ten on the bar. The bartender did his work and went back to his chat with the dancer. "How's your drink, sap?" I said.

"Hey, I don't know you. Stop that stuff."

"That's all right, Meatball, you don't need to know me. I'm just here to watch the last free hours of the greatest sap that ever lived." I gestured with my beer.

"Hey, what the hell?" The Meatball started to get to his feet.

"Oh, don't get up, sap. Stay comfortable. Enjoy your drink. It's better than what they serve in Angola."

"Angola! Hey, what the hell?"

"How long has it been, Meatball? How long have you been the sap for Lou Cantrell? Did it start with that high school football game? The one with the tough defensive end, the kid that ruined your plans? Is that when it started?"

The Meatball looked at me. His eyes got wide.

"Sure, you've been with him all this time. All through the days in Shreveport, wrestling, then karate. Then Cantrell came down here and he knew he'd need a sap, so he brought you along. And when the fighters wouldn't do like they were told, you had a little job to do. Only you messed it up, like always, and now you play the sap for the last time. *Too many bullets,* Meatball. The police are saying *too many bullets.* Suicides get it right the first time, or they don't get it at all. Jimmy was tough, but not that tough. And the gun. Shreveport registration. Why would Jimmy have a gun registered in Shreveport?"

"That gun wasn't . . ."

"*Sure* it was, Meatball. Sure it was, *sap!*"

Only he didn't stay to hear it. He left fast, and when he was gone the bartender and the dancer were looking my way. "Poor sap," I said. "Didn't even *touch* his drink." And then I left, too.

I didn't have to work that night, but I'm not real sure how I spent my time. Grief affects people in different ways. I woke up early to the phone and it might have been ringing for a while.

It was Jack Lucas.

"I got my story," Jack said.

"How's that?" I said, or tried to. My tongue kept sticking.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Meatball killed Cantrell last night. A motel in Finaud. He just flew off the handle."

"Imagine that," I said.

"You got any ideas?"

"Not a one."

"Well, they figure him for killing the black kid, too."

"Imagine that." I felt calm pass over me.

"Anyway, I thought you'd want to know."

"Thanks, Jack."

I hung up the phone and got out of bed. My head hurt less and less. I noticed I wasn't sweating—the summer heat had finally broken. I made my way to the closet and started to get dressed for church.

DID YOU MISS A KEY ISSUE? BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE

alfred HITCHCOCK'S mystery magazine

LAST CHANCE TO UNLOCK MORE MYSTERIES IN ALFRED HITCHCOCK. CHECK OFF TODAY THE ALFRED HITCHCOCK BACK ISSUES THAT YOU'D LIKE, AND MAIL WITH YOUR CHECK OR MONEY ORDER. ORDERS TAKEN ON FIRST-COME, FIRST-SERVED BASIS. HURRY! LIMITED SUPPLY AVAILABLE.

ISSUES	$3.50 each
January 1983	☐
February 1983	☐
March 1983	☐
April 1983	☐
May 1983	☐
June 1983	☐
July 1983	☐
August 1983	☐
September 1983	☐
October 1983	☐
November 1983	☐
December 1983	☐

MAIL TO

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
P.O. Box 999
Ridgefield, N.J.
07657

☐ Enclosed is check or money order for $_____
(Cost includes postage and handling)
Make checks payable to ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Name _____

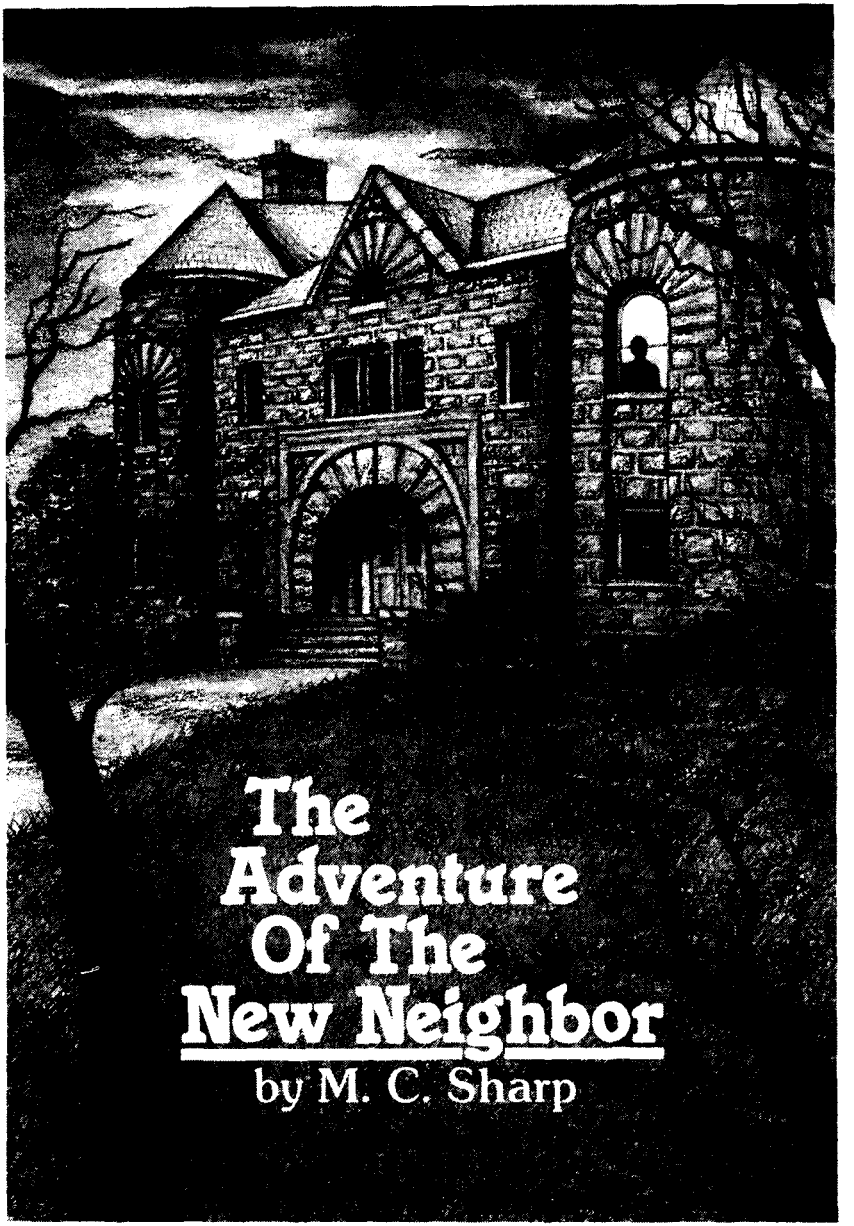
Street/No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery

4/9

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



The Adventure Of The New Neighbor

by M. C. Sharp

Illustration by Laurie Harden

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The old Drexel house, across the street and down two doors from our house, had been vacant since I was a kid, so it was quite an event when we heard that it was being cleaned and readied for a new occupant.

The house was a Romanesque-Revival type, set back from the street on a couple of acres, with odd-shaped windows across the top floor and a sloping mansard roof. The once-lush landscaping had gone to seed, choked with weeds and brambles, and the giant oaks and maples kept the house in perpetual gloom. Several windows were broken and the paint was peeling.

It was to this house that Clyde Drexel, the only son of the late Cyrus Drexel, our town's only millionaire, was returning after nearly ten years in a mental institution.

The Drexels had been a source of mystery to my friends and me when we were kids, before the tragedy had occurred and Clyde was sent away. Cyrus, a withered old sexagenarian with a huge walrus mustache, had made most of his money in real estate and owned property all over town. We would watch him riding in his chauffeured Cadillac, sitting ramrod straight and staring austerely ahead. He never even deigned to glance in our direction. Since his wife had died—in childbirth with Clyde—he only left the house to attend to business matters and was considered by most of the neighbors to be quite humorless and supercilious.

Clyde, the only child, had been born retarded and was kept in the house most of the time; word was that he was let out only at night to go for walks around the grounds with Miss Field, the housekeeper. We had only seen him a couple of times. He was about my age, but he was a huge boy, nearly six feet tall, with massive shoulders and immense arms.

Cyrus had a chauffeur/handyman who worked for him. He was a dark-eyed sinister looking fellow, always glaring at us kids and shouting at us if we ventured onto the grounds. We were all frightened of him and gave him a wide berth; we even sacrificed the occasional baseball, without a rescue attempt, that rolled into the yard.

Of course Clyde never came out to play with us. We would have been too scared to go up and knock on the door, anyway, so we wondered from afar what went on inside the mysterious house and attributed all sorts of implausible behavior to the sole heir to the Drexel fortune.

Tim Flannegan said, "I hear that he's a religious fanatic and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

prays all the time and wears horsehair shirts."

Myron White ventured, "Someone said he lifts weights and practices all the time with knives and swords."

Carl Taylor, my best buddy, said, "He just watches, mainly. I've seen him at the window, just looking out."

Connie Riley agreed. "He watches me. I've seen him at that upstairs window, the one that always has the curtains closed. He must be lonely . . ."

So Clyde Drexel remained a favorite topic of speculation, along with the number of homers Mantle would hit that season and the amount of time it would take our respective selves to become rich and famous once we were grown up, but it was the day after my twelfth birthday, in June, that the whole mysterious aspect of Clyde and the house came to a head.

It was a little while after dinner and Carl and I were lying in my back yard gazing up at the sky. Darkness had fallen and the stars shone down on us as we lay comfortably chewing on pieces of long grass and talking summer talk—baseball, swimming, new bicycles. Suddenly our serenity was shattered by a crash—the sound of breaking glass—and a man's yell. It came from across the street. We jumped up and ran around to the front of the house. Toward us from across the street ran a man, hollering as he puffed away from the Drexel house. It was Chenley, the Drexels' chauffeur. His face was bloody and he was barefoot, clad only in a pair of jeans. Behind him, bearing down on him, ran a huge white-faced bulk of a boy—Clyde—shouting garbled, unintelligible exhortations at the fleeing man. Saliva streamed from his mouth and back across his cheek. Chenley stumbled slightly and Clyde was on him, bringing him to the ground. The two rolled around in the middle of the street, Clyde making growling, snarling sounds as he tried to get a grip on Chenley, who, being thinner and more agile, was squirming frantically, able so far to avoid the death-grip of the enraged boy.

We watched, mesmerized, from our front lawn. My mother and father had come out on the porch; the neighbors were all watching from the safety of their houses. All the TV's and lawn mowers had been stilled as if by a single master switch, and for a few seconds only the sounds of the fighters broke the eerie silence as we all stared, as if in shock.

Suddenly Chenley's fortunes took a turn for the worse and Clyde got a grip on his throat and began shaking him, as a terrier shakes

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a rat, and my father, a high school football star, leapt off the porch to run to the man's aid. But old Mr. Drexel, who had come charging out of the house as fast as his feeble legs could carry him, got there first and grabbed his son around the shoulders. It was just at that moment that Chenley, on his knees with his feet braced against the curb, let loose with a roundhouse punch. Clyde ducked and his father caught the full force of the blow directly in his face, which almost seemed to explode, blood spattering Chenley and the boy, and he slumped in a senseless heap as the hapless chauffeur, after staring, aghast, at what he'd done, disappeared around the corner of our house.

The sight of his father lying in a pool of blood seemed to dissipate Clyde's rage, and he looked from my dad to the still form in the street and back again, a mute appeal, his face a wide-eyed mask of confusion and fear.

I saw Chenley peering out from behind our rose bush, the sweat streaming down his face, mingling with the blood, and his hands rubbing his throat. His breath came in rasping gasps as he bent over, gulping in air.

My father, with the help of Carl's dad, got the Drexels back to their house and Chenley followed when the sheriff showed up. In a few moments an ambulance came and took the old man away.

When my dad returned, he told us what had happened. From what the housekeeper, Miss Field, said, it seemed that Clyde, bereft of a mother's love and largely ignored by his father, had transferred the love and attention he would have directed toward his parents to Miss Field, who, being a very caring person and long in the employ of the Drexels, pampered the boy and treated him as though he were her own son. He would follow her around the house, helping her with her duties, and they would spend many an evening together in front of the fire while the old man was closeted away working on business papers, she reading to him and helping him with his lessons and he petting her and trying to please her.

It may be wondered that Miss Field, an attractive black-haired lady only in her mid-thirties, would be satisfied with such a cloistered existence. She did, in fact, have a private side; her life was not without romance, and her current romantic involvement featured none other than Chenley. They had been making love in her room, inadvertently leaving the door unlocked, and Clyde had wandered in on them. He had no idea what was going on; he thought Chenley was hurting her and he attacked the amorous chauffeur,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

throwing him through a set of french windows and chasing him out into the street.

The next morning we heard the terrible news. Mr. Drexel had died during the night from bone splinters in the brain. Chenley was arrested and sent to prison. Miss Field stayed at the house for a while, helping the lawyers settle the estate, and then she moved away. Clyde was sent to the Beeton Home, an expensive private hospital for mental incompetents and where rich alcoholics and drug addicts went to be cured.

The police kept an eye on the house, and periodically workmen would stop by to keep it from falling too far into disrepair.

And now Clyde, having turned twenty-one, was back, bringing a housekeeper, Mrs. Schmidt, a hefty looking woman with a German accent, from Beeton with him. She took over the running of the house, saw to it that it and the grounds were made livable again, and handled all contacts with the outside world for Clyde, so, as before, once he was ensconced inside we rarely saw him. I would sit on my father's porch (my porch now—I had taken over the house when Dad had died) and smoke my pipe, speculating anew about the goings-on in the old house. Occasionally I was sure I could see someone moving about the grounds. Maybe it was Clyde taking his nocturnal walks.

Shortly after he moved in, some strange things began happening.

One of the neighborhood boys found his cocker spaniel in the alley behind Drexel's house. The dog's neck was broken.

A week later something more serious happened. Old Mr. Balomar, who lived on the next block, was knocked on the head and kicked shortly after dark as he was walking home down the unlit side street next to the Drexel house. He had not seen his assailant, could give the police nothing to go on.

Things of this nature were very rare in our small town; we hadn't even had a robbery for years, so people looked for someone to blame, and that someone was Clyde Drexel.

We watched when two detectives from the city police drove up and parked in front of Drexel's. They got out and walked up the path to the front door and knocked. Mrs. Schmidt opened it and let them in. They stayed a while and left.

The next day a doctor from Beeton stopped by the Drexel house, then talked to some of the neighbors, and went back to the hospital.

The assault remained unsolved.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I stopped off at Benny's for a beer on the way home the next day. At the end of the bar a group of construction workers were having a few and discussing the incidents.

". . . makes sense to me. It all started when he moved back," one was saying, draining his can.

The door opened and a tall, thin man walked in and sat down at the far end of the bar. He ordered whisky and looked around the room through squinty eyes. A slouch hat was pulled down low on his forehead and he had a thin black mustache.

"They oughtta send him back to that loony bin," another growled, popping another top.

They continued in that vein while the stranger listened. He finished his drink and left.

Late that night I was awakened by shouting in the street. The group of construction workers was gathered on the sidewalk in front of Drexel's house. One of them had his pickup truck parked with the headlights illuminating the front of the house. A couple of cars had stopped, and lights were coming on up and down the street. I spied Mrs. Schmidt's frightened face at a window.

"Drexel, we want you outta here," hollered one of them. "Drexel! You hear me?" he bellowed.

One of his buddies laughed, staggered drunkenly, and heaved an empty bottle at the house.

Just then the sheriff arrived with a deputy and squelched the altercation before it got out of hand.

I had walked out on the porch. Some of the neighbors were outside watching and a few more cars had stopped in the street. A tall figure stood alone in the corner of the yard, his hands thrust into his pockets and a cigarette glowing in his mouth. As a car turned around in the street, its headlights flashed briefly on the man and I saw a grim smile on his face. It was the thin man from Benny's.

It was the next day when the idea hit me, and I went over to Drexel's to speak to Mrs. Schmidt about it. She was dubious at first, but finally agreed that the whole thing might make some sense. She really seemed to care about her charge, and went upstairs to explain the situation to him.

I explored the living room while she was gone. In all these years it was the first time I had been in the house. Family portraits hung on the walls; I recognized Cyrus. The furniture was very old and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

looked as though it hadn't been used much. A player piano stood in the corner. The shades were half drawn, though little sunlight could have filtered in through the trees to relieve the gloom. Small lights burned at either end of a carved mahogany mantelpiece that overhung an enormous fireplace.

After several minutes I heard their footsteps on the stairs; hers firm, his tentative. They stopped for a moment on the landing and then they entered the room.

He looked at me curiously from over Mrs. Schmidt's shoulder. He was about six feet six and probably weighed two hundred and fifty pounds. His skin was pasty white from his indoor existence. His light brown hair, thinning already at the top, was parted in the middle and combed back behind his ears, where it fell to his shoulders. He was dressed in khaki pants and a white shirt and was nervously working his hands.

"Clyde, this is our neighbor, Martin Griffith."

"Hello, Clyde," I said, offering my hand.

He hesitated, as if he were about to run out of the room, then advanced and shook my hand. His handshake, like his demeanor, was irresolute.

"I've seen you. Across the street," he said. His voice was high and raspy.

We sat down and Mrs. Schmidt got coffee. As we talked, he seemed to relax a little and to enjoy the novelty of a visitor in his house.

We made our plans, deciding not to notify the authorities until we had more solid evidence to show them. My suspicions might seem a little farfetched to a hardheaded police detective, and if they didn't pan out it might exacerbate Clyde's already tenuous position.

Mrs. Schmidt made up a bed for me in an extra room and I arranged to spend a few nights there to keep an eye on things and maybe solve what I had begun to think of facetiously to myself as the Adventure of the New Neighbor.

It was a welcome diversion for Clyde, having me around, and he showed a keen interest in the intrigue in which he found himself entangled. He warmed up to me and after a couple of days most of his shyness was gone and we were pretty good friends. He was very curious, and asked me questions about everything from girls to baseball to auto mechanics. His intelligence surprised me; his

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

only real handicap seemed to be a profound lack of social amenities and a dearth of common, everyday knowledge. He might be a little slow, but did that warrant a life of being shut away from the rest of the world? Had he fallen below his father's expectations and been consigned to a life of sequestration by some vagary of the eccentric old man's pride, perpetuated by the executors of the estate?

It was my third night at Drexel's and I was wondering if my deductions were all wrong. I was reading in my room about two in the morning. The windows were taped over with black cloth so no light could be seen from outside, and my door was open. I heard a noise downstairs and quickly put out the light, grabbing a tire knocker I had ready on the nightstand. I eased out into the hall and crouched behind the telephone table, letting my eyes get adjusted to the darkness.

I saw a dark form creeping up the stairs, listening intently and pausing every couple of steps. It headed straight for the housekeeper's room. The house had been watched; it was a good thing I had sneaked in through the back yard, so dark at night that I had to feel my way. The housekeeper's door was opened and the figure went inside. I tiptoed closer to watch.

A few random rays of light from the street outside dappled the room with undulating, shifting shadows. All was quiet. The figure stood by the bed. A knife flashed.

I reached in and clicked on the light as the intruder slashed down into the still form on the bed. He buried the blade in the bedclothes as light filled the room and he looked, startled, over his shoulder at me. I had been right—it was the thin man from Benny's. He hesitated only a second, then whirled around, whipped a throwing star from his pocket, and threw it at me, planting it in my shoulder. It felt like fire. I backed up against the door jamb, dropped the tire knocker, and fell to my knees as he rushed past me, leaving the knife embedded in the mattress.

But he ran into an obstacle in the hall. Clyde was standing there waiting for him, and batted him down the stairs. Clyde clattered down after him as he picked himself up and ran through the living room and out the front door, the only avenue of escape open to him. I followed as best I could, trying to stifle the flow of blood that was soaking my shirtsleeve.

The frightened man ran through the front yard and out into the street, right in front of a speeding pickup truck. The driver jammed

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on his brakes. The screeching truck slid sideways, bounced against the curb, and finally came to rest on its side—with the thin man pinned underneath. The driver, bleeding from a cut on his forehead, scrambled out through a window.

Luckily the thin man had landed in a small depression in the street, and though the bed of the truck lay across his chest, the full weight of the vehicle wasn't on him. He struggled uselessly and screamed for help. Lights came on up and down the street and a crowd began to gather.

Clyde put out a huge paw and pushed against the truck, rocking it. It settled back with a little more of its weight on the man. He gasped, looking beseechingly at Clyde.

"Help me," he wheezed.

"Chenley." Clyde spat out the word. He looked stonily at the ex-chauffeur and rocked the truck again.

"No . . ." Chenley said. "Please . . ."

"Talk," Clyde said, his hand resting ominously on the truck. "Tell 'em it wasn't me."

I was beginning to realize that Clyde Drexel was a lot shrewder that I had imagined.

There were about a dozen people standing in a semicircle around us, watching, rapt, as the drama unfolded. Clyde stared inexorably into Chenley's eyes. He knew he was dead if he didn't talk.

"It was me," Chenley whispered, barely able to speak under the huge weight. His mouth opened again, but no sound came out and Clyde pushed against the truck and moved it an inch off the man's chest.

"I killed the dog. Knocked the old man on the head," he got out. Sweat dripped from his face as he jerked, fighting for breath.

Clyde jiggled the truck.

"Went after the housekeeper."

"Why?" Clyde demanded.

"Money hidden in the house. Your old man had it stashed there. I figured they'd blame you and send you back to Beeton. Then I could get in the house and find it."

I helped Clyde and Mrs. Schmidt search the house. After a couple of hours we found it in a compartment behind a mahogany bookshelf. Over two hundred thousand dollars, mostly in twenty dollar bills. The old man had been eccentric, indeed.

The thought of all that money must have driven Chenley crazy

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

while he was locked away. He knew it was somewhere in the house, and when he was released and came to look for it and found, instead of a vacant house, that Clyde was living there again, he had concocted the daring plan to get him out of the way. When I had recognized him in the yard the other night I did some checking and found out that he had been released only a week after Clyde had moved back. After the first two incidents I figured he would try something more drastic, possibly directed at Mrs. Schmidt, so I moved her to another room and kept watch, though it was Clyde who saved the day. Chenley was sent back to those dark shades whence he came.

It was a Saturday afternoon and I was sitting in Benny's with some of the boys watching the ball game and having a cold one. We gathered there every weekend during baseball season to watch the Cubs.

In the middle of the second inning the front door opened and Clyde Drexel stepped inside and looked shyly around the room. All conversation stopped as everybody stared at him. It took me a few seconds to get over my surprise.

"Clyde," I called, waving to him. "Over here."

He shuffled forward, a tentative look of apprehension on his face.

"Hi, Martin," he said.

I got a chair for him and he sat down, his eyes averted, looking down at the floor.

Suddenly the group erupted with a chorus of "hello's" and handshakes, everyone eager to make him feel welcome. Someone plopped a Cubs hat on his head and Benny brought him a beer on the house. He looked at me and just grinned and grinned.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MYSTERY CLASSIC

Lord Chizelrigg's Missing Fortune

by Robert Barr

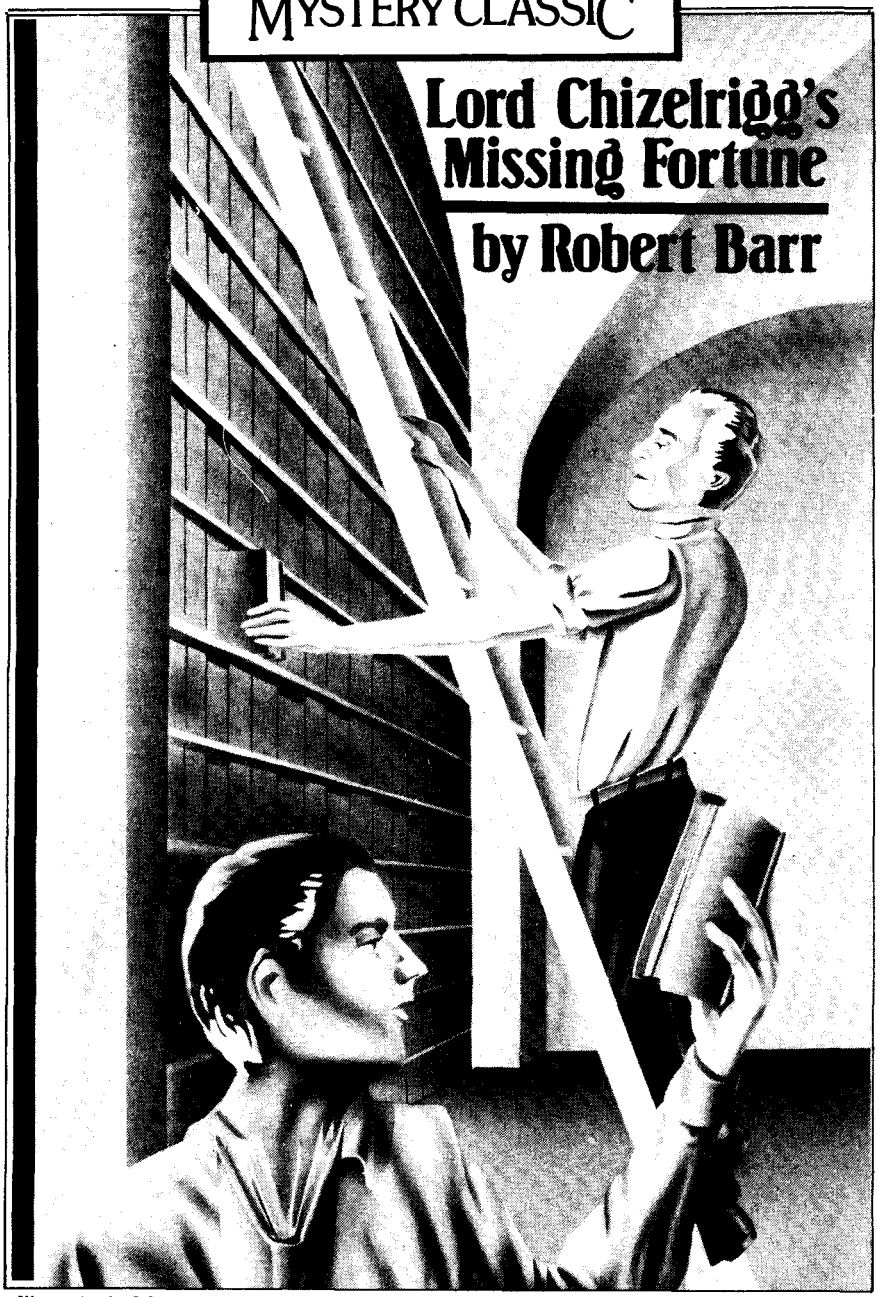


Illustration by John Jinks

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The name of the late Lord Chizelrigg never comes to my mind without instantly suggesting that of Mr. T. A. Edison. I never saw the late Lord Chizelrigg, and I have met Mr. Edison only twice in my life, yet the two men are linked in my memory, and it was a remark the latter once made that in great measure enabled me to solve the mystery which the former had wrapped round his actions.

There is no memorandum at hand to tell me the year in which those two meetings with Edison took place. I received a note from the Italian ambassador in Paris requesting me to wait upon him at the embassy. I learned that on the next day a deputation was to set out from the embassy to one of the chief hotels, there to make a call in state upon the great American inventor, and formally present to him various insignia accompanying certain honors which the king of Italy had conferred upon him. As many Italian nobles of high rank had been invited, and as these dignitaries would not only be robed in the costumes pertaining to their orders, but in many cases would wear jewels of almost inestimable value, my presence was desired in the belief that I might perhaps be able to ward off any attempt on the part of the deft-handed gentry who might possibly make an effort to gain these treasures, and I may add, with perhaps some little self-gratification, no *contretemps* occurred.

Mr. Edison, of course, had long before received notification of the hour at which the deputation would wait upon him, but when we entered the large parlor assigned to the inventor, it was evident to me at a glance that the celebrated man had forgotten all about the function. He stood by a bare table, from which the cloth had been jerked and flung into a corner, and upon that table were placed several bits of black and greasy machinery—cog wheels, pulleys, bolts, etc. These seemingly belonged to a French workman who stood on the other side of the table, with one of the parts in his grimy hand. Edison's own hands were not too clean, for he had palpably been examining the material, and conversing with the workman, who wore the ordinary long blouse of an iron craftsman in a small way. I judged him to be a man with a little shop of his own in some back street, who did odd jobs of engineering, assisted perhaps by a skilled helper or two, and a few apprentices. Edison looked sternly towards the door as the solemn procession filed in, and there was a trace of annoyance on his face at the interruption, mixed with a shade of perplexity as to what this gorgeous display

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all meant. The Italian is as ceremonious as the Spaniard where a function is concerned, and the official who held the ornate box which contained the jewelry resting on a velvet cushion, stepped slowly forward, and came to a stand in front of the bewildered American. Then the ambassador, in sonorous voice, spoke some gracious words regarding the friendship existing between the United States and Italy, expressed a wish that their rivalry should ever take the form of benefits conferred upon the human race, and instanced the honored recipient as the most notable example the world had yet produced of a man bestowing blessings upon all nations in the arts of peace. The eloquent ambassador concluded by saying that, at the command of his royal master, it was both his duty and his pleasure to present, and so forth and so forth.

Mr. Edison, visibly ill at ease, nevertheless made a suitable reply in the fewest possible words, and the *étalage* being thus at an end, the noblemen, headed by their ambassador, slowly retired, myself forming the tail of the procession. Inwardly I deeply sympathized with the French workman who thus unexpectedly found himself confronted by so much magnificence. He cast one wild look about him, but saw that his retreat was cut off unless he displaced some of these gorgeous grandees. He tried then to shrink into himself, and finally stood helpless like one paralyzed. In spite of republican institutions, there is deep down in every Frenchman's heart a respect and awe for official pageants, sumptuously staged and costumed as this one was. But he likes to view it from afar, and supported by his fellows, not thrust incongruously into the midst of things, as was the case with this panic-stricken engineer. As I passed out, I cast a glance over my shoulder at the humble artisan content with a profit of a few francs a day, and at the millionaire inventor opposite him. Edison's face, which during the address had been cold and impassive, reminding me vividly of a bust of Napoleon, was now all aglow with enthusiasm as he turned to his humble visitor. He cried joyfully to the workman:

"A minute's demonstration is worth an hour's explanation. I'll call round tomorrow at your shop, about ten o'clock, and show you how to make the thing work."

I lingered in the hall until the Frenchman came out, then, introducing myself to him, asked the privilege of visiting his shop next day at ten. This was accorded with that courtesy which you will always find among the industrial classes of France, and next day I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Edison. During our conver-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sation I complimented him on his invention of the incandescent electric light, and this was the reply that has ever remained in my memory:

"It was not an invention, but a discovery. We knew what we wanted; a carbonized tissue, which would withstand the electric current in a vacuum for, say, a thousand hours. If no such tissue existed, then the incandescent light, as we know it, was not possible. My assistants started out to find this tissue, and we simply carbonized everything we could lay our hands on, and ran the current through it in a vacuum. At last we struck the right thing, as we were bound to do if we kept on long enough, and if the thing existed. Patience and hard work will overcome any obstacle."

This belief has been of great assistance to me in my profession. I know the idea is prevalent that a detective arrives at his solutions in a dramatic way through following clues invisible to the ordinary man. This doubtless frequently happens, but, as a general thing, the patience and hard work which Mr. Edison commends is a much safer guide. Very often the following of excellent clues had led me to disaster, as was the case with my unfortunate attempt to solve the mystery of the five hundred diamonds.

As I was saying, I never think of the late Lord Chizelrigg without remembering Mr. Edison at the same time, and yet the two were very dissimilar. I suppose Lord Chizelrigg was the most useless man that ever lived, while Edison is the opposite.

One day my servant brought into me a card on which was engraved "Lord Chizelrigg."

"Show his lordship in," I said, and there appeared a young man of perhaps twenty-four or twenty-five, well dressed, and of most charming manners, who, nevertheless, began his interview by asking a question such as had never before been addressed to me, and which, if put to a solicitor, or other professional man, would have been answered with some indignation. Indeed, I believe it is a written or unwritten law of the legal profession that the acceptance of such a proposal as Lord Chizelrigg made to me, would if proved, result in the disgrace and ruin of the lawyer.

"Monsieur Valmont," began Lord Chizelrigg, "do you ever take up cases on speculation?"

"On speculation, sir? I do not think I understand you."

His lordship blushed like a girl, and stammered slightly as he attempted an explanation.

"What I mean is, do you accept a case on a contingent fee? That

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is to say, monsieur—er—well, not to put too fine a point upon it, no results, no pay."

I replied somewhat severely:

"Such an offer has never been made to me, and I may say at once that I should be compelled to decline it were I favored with the opportunity. In the cases submitted to me, I devote my time and attention to their solution. I try to deserve success, but I cannot command it, and as in the interim I must live, I am reluctantly compelled to make a charge for my time, at least. I believe the doctor sends in his bill, though the patient dies."

The young man laughed uneasily, and seemed almost too embarrassed to proceed, but finally he said:

"Your illustration strikes home with greater accuracy than probably you imagined when you uttered it. I have just paid my last penny to the physician who attended my late uncle, Lord Chizelrigg, who died six months ago. I am fully aware that the suggestion I made may seem like a reflection upon your skill, or rather, as implying a doubt regarding it. But I should be grieved, monsieur, if you fell into such an error. I could have come here and commissioned you to undertake some elucidation of the strange situation in which I find myself, and I make no doubt you would have accepted the task if your numerous engagements had permitted. Then, if you failed, I should have been unable to pay you, for I am practically bankrupt. My whole desire, therefore, was to make an honest beginning, and to let you know exactly how I stand. If you succeed, I shall be a rich man; if you do not succeed, I shall be what I am now, penniless. Have I made it plain now why I began with a question which you had every right to resent?"

"Perfectly plain, my lord, and your candor does you credit."

I was very much taken with the unassuming manners of the young man, and his evident desire to accept no service under false pretenses. When I had finished my sentence the pauper nobleman rose to his feet, and bowed.

"I am very much your debtor, monsieur, for your courtesy in receiving me, and can only beg pardon for occupying your time on a futile quest. I wish you good morning, monsieur."

"One moment, my lord," I rejoined, waving him to his chair again.

"Although I am unprepared to accept a commission on the terms you suggest, I may, nevertheless, be able to offer a hint or two that will prove of service to you. I think I remember the an-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nouncement of Lord Chizelrigg's death. He was somewhat eccentric, was he not?"

"Eccentric?" said the young man, with a slight laugh, seating himself again—"well, *rather!*"

"I vaguely remember that he was accredited with the possession of something like twenty thousand acres of land?"

"Twenty-seven thousand, as a matter of fact," replied my visitor.

"Have you fallen heir to the lands as well as to the title?"

"Oh, yes; the estate was entailed. The old gentleman could not divert it from me if he would, and I rather suspect that fact must have been the cause of some worry to him."

"But surely, my lord, a man who owns, as one might say, a principality in this wealthy realm of England cannot be penniless?"

Again the young man laughed.

"Well, no," he replied, thrusting his hand in his pocket and bringing to light a few brown coppers, and a white silver piece. "I possess enough money to buy some food tonight, but not enough to dine at the Hotel Cecil. You see, it is like this. I belong to a somewhat ancient family, various members of whom went the pace, and mortgaged their acres up the hilt. I could not raise a further penny on my estates were I to try my hardest, because at the time the money was lent, land was much more valuable than it is today. Agricultural depression, and all that sort of thing, have, if I may put it so, left me a good many thousands worse off than if I had no land at all. Besides this, during my late uncle's life, Parliament, on his behalf, intervened once or twice, allowing him in the first place to cut valuable timber, and in the second place to sell the pictures of Chizelrigg Chase at Christie's for figures which made one's mouth water."

"And what became of the money?" I asked, whereupon once more this genial nobleman laughed.

"That is exactly what I came up in the lift to learn if Monsieur Valmont could discover."

"My lord, you interest me," I said, quite truly, with an uneasy apprehension that I should take up his case after all, for I liked the young man already. His lack of pretense appealed to me, and that sympathy which is so universal among my countrymen enveloped him, as I may say, quite independent of my own will.

"My uncle," went on Lord Chizelrigg, "was somewhat of an anomaly in our family. He must have been a reversal to a very, very

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ancient type; a type of which we have no record. He was as miserly as his forefathers were prodigal. When he came into the title and estate some twenty years ago, he dismissed the whole retinue of servants, and, indeed, was defendant in several cases at law where retainers of our family brought suit against him for wrongful dismissal, or dismissal without a penny compensation in lieu of notice. I am pleased to say he lost all his cases, and when he pleaded poverty, got permission to sell a certain number of heirlooms, enabling him to make compensation, and giving him something on which to live. These heirlooms at auction sold so unexpectedly well that my uncle acquired a taste, as it were, of what might be done. He could always prove that the rents went to the mortgagees, and that he had nothing on which to exist, so on several occasions he obtained permission from the courts to cut timber and sell pictures, until he denuded the estate and made an empty barn of the old manor house. He lived like any laborer, occupying himself sometimes as a carpenter, sometimes as a blacksmith; indeed, he made a blacksmith's shop of the library, one of the most noble rooms in Britain, containing thousands of valuable books which again and again he applied for permission to sell, but this privilege was never granted to him. I find on coming into the property that my uncle quite persistently evaded the law, and depleted this superb collection, book by book, surreptitiously through dealers in London. This, of course, would have got him into deep trouble if it had been discovered before his death, but now the valuable volumes are gone, and there is no redress. Many of them are doubtless in America, or in museums and collections of Europe."

"You wish me to trace them, perhaps?" I interpolated.

"Oh, no; they are past praying for. The old man made tens of thousands by the sale of the timber, and other of thousands by disposing of the pictures. The house is denuded of its fine old furniture, which was immensely valuable, and then the books, as I have said, must have brought in the revenue of a prince, if he got anything like their value, and you may be sure he was shrewd enough to know their worth. Since the last refusal of the courts to allow him further relief, as he termed it, which was some seven years ago, he had quite evidently been disposing of books and furniture by a private sale, in defiance of the law. At that time I was under age, but my guardians opposed his application to the courts, and demanded an account of the moneys already in his hands. The judges upheld the opposition of my guardians, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

refused to allow a further spoliation of the estate, but they did not grant the accounting my guardians asked, because the proceeds of the former sales were entirely at the disposal of my uncle, and were sanctioned by the law to permit him to live as befitted his station. If he lived meagerly instead of lavishly, as my guardians contended, that, the judges said, was his affair, and there the matter ended.

"My uncle took a violent dislike to me on account of this opposition to his last application, although, of course, I had nothing whatever to do with the matter. He lived like a hermit, mostly in the library, and was waited upon by an old man and his wife, and these three were the only inhabitants of a mansion that could comfortably house a hundred. He visited nobody, and would allow no one to approach Chizelrigg Chase. In order that all who had the misfortune to have dealings with him should continue to endure trouble after his death, he left what might be called a will, but which rather may be termed a letter to me. Here is a copy of it.

" 'My dear Tom,—You will find your fortune between a couple of sheets of paper in the library.

" 'Your affectionate uncle,
" 'Reginald Moran, Earl of Chizelrigg.' "

"I should doubt if that were a legal will," said I.

"It doesn't need to be," replied the young man with a smile. "I am next-of-kin, and heir to everything he possessed, although, of course, he might have given his money elsewhere if he had chosen to do so. Why he did not bequeath it to some institution, I do not know. He knew no man personally except his own servants, whom he misused and starved, but, as he told them, he misused and starved himself, so they had no cause to grumble. He said he was treating them like one of the family. I suppose he thought it would cause me more worry and anxiety if he concealed the money and put me on the wrong scent, which I am convinced he has done, than to leave it openly to any person or charity."

"I need not ask if you have searched the library?"

"Searched it? Why, there never was such a search since the world began!"

"Possibly you put the task into incompetent hands?"

"You are hinting, Monsieur Valmont, that I engaged others until my money was gone, then came to you with a speculative proposal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Let me assure you such is not the case. Incompetent hands, I grant you, but the hands were my own. For the past six months I have lived practically as my uncle lived. I have rummaged that library from floor to ceiling. It was left in a frightful state, littered with old newspapers, accounts, and what-not. Then, of course, there were the books remaining in the library, still a formidable collection."

"Was your uncle a religious man?"

"I could not say. I surmise not. You see, I was unacquainted with him, and never saw him until after his death. I fancy he was not religious, otherwise he could not have acted as he did. Still, he proved himself a man of such twisted mentality that anything is possible."

"I knew a case once where an heir who expected a large sum of money was bequeathed a family Bible, which he threw into the fire, learning afterwards, to his dismay, that it contained many thousands of pounds in Bank of England notes, the object of the devisor being to induce the legatee to read the good Book or suffer through the neglect of it."

"I have searched the Scriptures," said the youthful earl with a laugh, "but the benefit has been moral rather than material."

"Is there any chance that your uncle has deposited his wealth in a bank, and has written a check for the amount, leaving it between two leaves of a book?"

"Anything is possible, monsieur, but I think that highly improbable. I have gone through every tome, page by page, and I suspect very few of the volumes have been opened for the last twenty years."

"How much money do you estimate he accumulated?"

"He must have cleared more than a hundred thousand pounds, but speaking of banking it, I would like to say that my uncle evinced a deep distrust of banks, and never drew a check in his life so far as I am aware. All accounts were paid in gold by this old steward, who first brought the receipted bill in to my uncle, and then received the exact amount, after having left the room and waited until he was rung for, so that he might not learn the repository from which my uncle drew his store. I believe if the money is ever found it will be in gold, and I am very sure that this will was written, if we may call it a will, to put us on the wrong scent."

"Have you had the library cleared out?"

"Oh, no, it is practically as my uncle left it. I realized that if I

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

were to call in help, it would be well that the newcomer found it undisturbed."

"You were quite right, my lord. You say you examined all the papers?"

"Yes; so far as that is concerned, the room has been very fairly gone over, but nothing that was in it the day my uncle died has been removed, not even his anvil."

"His anvil?"

"Yes; I told you he made a blacksmith's shop, as well as bedroom, of the library. It is a huge room, with a great fireplace at one end which formed an excellent forge. He and the steward built the forge in the eastern fireplace, of brick and clay, with their own hands, and erected there a secondhand blacksmith's bellows."

"What work did he do at his forge?"

"Oh, anything that was required about the place. He seems to have been a very expert ironworker. He would never buy a new implement for the garden or the house so long as he could get one secondhand, and he never bought anything secondhand while at his forge he might repair what was already in use. He kept an old cob, on which he used to ride through the park, and he always put the shoes on this cob himself, the steward informs me, so he must have understood the use of blacksmith's tools. He made a carpenter's shop of the chief drawing room and erected a bench there. I think a very useful mechanic was spoiled when my uncle became an earl."

"You have been living at the Chase since your uncle died?"

"If you call it living, yes. The old steward and his wife have been looking after me, as they looked after my uncle, and, seeing me day after day, coatless and covered with dust, I imagine they think me a second edition of the old man."

"Does the steward know the money is missing?"

"No; no one knows it but myself. This will was left on the anvil, in an envelope addressed to me."

"Your statement is exceedingly clear, Lord Chizelrigg, but I confess I don't see much daylight through it. Is there a pleasant country around Chizelrigg Chase?"

"Very; especially at this season of the year. In autumn and winter the house is a little drafty. It needs several thousand pounds to put it in repair."

"Drafts do not matter in the summer. I have been long enough in England not to share the fear of my countrymen for a *courant*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

d'air. Is there a spare bed in the manor house, or shall I take down a cot with me, or let us say a hammock?"

"Really," stammered the earl, blushing again, "you must not think I detailed all these circumstances in order to influence you to take up what may be a hopeless case. I, of course, am deeply interested, and, therefore, somewhat prone to be carried away when I begin a recital of my uncle's eccentricities. If I receive your permission, I will call on you again in a month or two. To tell you the truth, I borrowed a little money from the old steward, and visited London to see my legal advisers, hoping that in the circumstances I may get permission to sell something that will keep me from starvation. When I spoke of the house being denuded I meant relatively, of course. There are still a good many antiquities which would doubtless bring me in a comfortable sum of money. I have been borne up by the belief that I should find my uncle's gold. Lately, I have been beset by a suspicion that the old gentleman thought the library the only valuable asset left, and for this reason wrote his note, thinking I would be afraid to sell anything from that room. The old rascal must have made a pot of money out of those shelves. The catalogue shows that there was a copy of the first book printed in England by Caxton, and several priceless Shakespeares, as well as many other volumes that a collector would give a small fortune for. All these are gone. I think when I show this to be the case, the authorities cannot refuse me the right to sell something, and, if I get this permission, I shall at once call upon you."

"Nonsense, Lord Chizelrigg. Put your application in motion, if you like. Meanwhile I beg of you to look upon me as a more substantial banker than your old steward. Let us enjoy a good dinner together at the Cecil tonight, if you will do me the honor to be my guest. Tomorrow we can leave for Chizelrigg Chase. How far is it?"

"About three hours," replied the young man, becoming as red as a new Queen Anne villa. "Really, Monsieur Valmont, you overwhelm me with your kindness, but nevertheless I accept your generous offer."

"Then that's settled. What's the name of the old steward?"

"Higgins."

"You are certain he has no knowledge of the hiding place of this treasure?"

"Oh, quite sure. My uncle was not a man to make a confidant of any one, least of all an old babbler like Higgins."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Well, I should like to be introduced to Higgins as a benighted foreigner. That will make him despise me and treat me like a child."

"Oh, I say," protested the earl, "I should have thought you'd lived long enough in England to have got out of the notion that we do not appreciate the foreigner. Indeed, we are the only nation in the world that extends a cordial welcome to him, rich or poor."

"*Certainement,* my lord, I should be deeply disappointed did you not take me at my proper valuation, but I cherish no delusions regarding the contempt with which Higgins will regard me. He will look upon me as a sort of simpleton to whom the Lord had been unkind by not making England my native land. Now, Higgins must be led to believe that I am in his own class; that is, a servant of yours. Higgins and I will gossip over the fire together, should these spring evenings prove chilly, and before two or three weeks are past I shall have learned a great deal about your uncle that you never dreamed of. Higgins will talk more freely with a fellow servant than with his master, however much he may respect that master, and then, as I am a foreigner, he will babble down to my comprehension, and I shall get details that he never would think of giving to a fellow countryman."

The young earl's modesty in such description of his home as he had given me, left me totally unprepared for the grandeur of the mansion, one corner of which he inhabited. It is such a place as you read of in romances of the Middle Ages; not a pinnacled or turreted French château of that period, but a beautiful and substantial stone manor house of a ruddy color, whose warm hue seemed to add a softness to the severity of its architecture. It is built round an outer and an inner courtyard and could house a thousand, rather than the hundred with which its owner had accredited it. There are many stone-mullioned windows, and one at the end of the library might well have graced a cathedral. This superb residence occupies the center of a heavily timbered park, and from the lodge at the gates we drove at least a mile and a half under the grandest avenue of old oaks I have ever seen. It seemed incredible that the owner of all this should actually lack the ready money to pay his fare to town!

Old Higgins met us at the station with a somewhat rickety cart, to which was attached the ancient cob that the late earl used to shoe. We entered a noble hall, which probably looked the larger

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

because of the entire absence of any kind of furniture, unless two complete suits of venerable armor which stood on either hand might be considered as furnishing. I laughed aloud when the door was shut, and the sound echoed like the merriment of ghosts from the dim timbered roof above me.

"What are you laughing at?" asked the earl.

"I am laughing to see you put your modern tall hat on that mediæval helmet."

"Oh, that's it! Well, put yours on the other. I mean no disrespect to the ancestor who wore this suit, but we are short of the harmless, necessary hat rack, so I put my topper on the antique helmet, and thrust the umbrella (if I have one) in behind here, and down one of his legs. Since I came in possession, a very crafty looking dealer from London visited me, and attempted to sound me regarding the sale of these suits of armor. I gathered he would give enough money to keep me in new suits, London made, for the rest of the life, but when I endeavored to find out if he had had commercial dealings with my prophetic uncle, he became frightened and bolted. I imagine that if I had possessed presence of mind enough to have lured him into one of our most uncomfortable dungeons, I might have learned where some of the family treasures went to. Come up these stairs, Monsieur Valmont, and I shall show you your room."

We had lunched on the train coming down, so after a wash in my own room I proceeded at once to inspect the library. It proved, indeed, a most noble apartment, and it had been scandalously used by the old reprobate, its late tenant. There were two huge fireplaces, one in the middle of the north wall and the other at the eastern end. In the latter had been erected a rude brick forge, and beside the forge hung a great black bellows, smoky with usage. On a wooden block lay the anvil, and around it rested and rusted several hammers, large and small. At the western end was a glorious window filled with ancient stained glass, which, as I have said, might have adorned a cathedral. Extensive as the collection of books was, the great size of this chamber made it necessary that only the outside wall should be covered with bookcases, and even these were divided by tall windows. The opposite wall was blank, with the exception of a picture here and there, and these pictures offered a further insult to the room, for they were cheap prints, mostly colored lithographs that had appeared in Christmas numbers of London weekly journals, encased in poverty-stricken frames, hanging from nails ruthlessly driven in above them. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

floor was covered with a litter of papers, in some places knee deep, and in the corner farthest from the forge still stood the bed on which the ancient miser had died.

"Looks like a stable, doesn't it?" commented the earl, when I had finished my inspection. "I am sure the old boy simply filled it up with this rubbish to give me the trouble of examining it. Higgins tells me that up to within a month before he died the room was reasonably clear of all this muck. Of course, it had to be, or the place would have caught fire from the sparks of the forge. The old man made Higgins gather all the papers he could find anywhere about the place, ancient accounts, newspapers, and what not, even to the brown wrapping paper you see, in which parcels came, and commanded him to strew the floor with this litter, because, as he complained, Higgins' boots on the boards made too much noise, and Higgins, who is not in the least of an inquiring mind, accepted this explanation as entirely meeting the case."

Higgins proved to be a garrulous old fellow, who needed no urging to talk about the late earl; indeed, it was almost impossible to deflect his conversation into any other channel. Twenty years' intimacy with the eccentric nobleman had largely obliterated that sense of deference with which an English servant usually approaches his master. An English underling's idea of nobility is the man who never by any possibility works with his hands. The fact that Lord Chizelrigg had toiled at the carpenter's bench; had mixed cement in the drawing room; had caused the anvil to ring out till midnight, aroused no admiration in Higgins' mind. In addition to this, the ancient nobleman had been penuriously strict in his examination of accounts, exacting the uttermost farthing, so the humble servitor regarded his memory with supreme contempt. I realized before the drive was finished from the station to Chizelrigg Chase that there was little use of introducing me to Higgins as a foreigner and a fellow servant. I found myself completely unable to understand what the old fellow said. His dialect was as unknown to me as the Choctaw language would have been, and the young earl was compelled to act as interpreter on the occasions when we set this garrulous talking-machine going.

The new Earl of Chizelrigg, with the enthusiasm of a boy, proclaimed himself my pupil and assistant, and said he would do whatever he was told. His thorough and fruitless search of the library had convinced him that the old man was merely chaffing him, as he put it, by leaving such a letter as he had written. His

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lordship was certain that the money had been hidden somewhere else; probably buried under one of the trees in the park. Of course this was possible, and represented the usual method by which a stupid person conceals treasure, yet I did not think it probable. All conversations with Higgins showed the earl to have been an extremely suspicious man; suspicious of banks, suspicious even of Bank of England notes, suspicious of every person on earth, not omitting Higgins himself. Therefore, as I told his nephew, the miser would never allow the fortune out of his sight and immediate reach.

From the first the oddity of the forge and anvil being placed in his bedroom struck me as peculiar, and I said to the young man—

"I'll stake my reputation that forge or anvil, or both, contain the secret. You see, the old gentleman worked sometimes till midnight, for Higgins could hear his hammering. If he used hard coal on the forge the fire would last through the night, and being in continual terror of thieves, as Higgins says, barricading the castle every evening before dark as if it were a fortress, he was bound to place the treasure in the most unlikely spot for a thief to get at it. Now, the coal fire smoldered all night long, and if the gold was in the forge underneath the embers, it would be extremely difficult to get at. A robber rummaging in the dark would burn his fingers in more senses than one. Then, as his lordship kept no less than four loaded revolvers under his pillow, all he had to do, if a thief entered his room, was to allow the search to go on until the thief started at the forge, then doubtless, as he had the range with reasonable accuracy night or day, he might sit up in bed and blaze away with revolver after revolver. There were twenty-eight shots that could be fired in about double as many seconds, so you see the robber stood little chance in the face of such a fusillade. I propose that we dismantle the forge."

Lord Chizelrigg was much taken by my reasoning, and one morning early we cut down the big bellows, tore it open, found it empty, then took brick after brick from the forge with a crowbar, for the old man had builded better than he knew with Portland cement. In fact, when we cleared away the rubbish between the bricks and the core of the furnace we came upon one cube of cement which was as hard as granite. With the aid of Higgins, and a set of rollers and levers, we managed to get this block out into the park, and attempted to crush it with the sledge hammers belonging to the forge, in which we were entirely unsuccessful. The more it resisted our efforts, the more certain we became that the coins would be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

found within it. As this would not be treasure-trove in the sense that the government might make a claim upon it, there was no particular necessity for secrecy, so we had up a man from the mines near by with drills and dynamite, who speedily shattered the block into a million pieces, more or less. Alas! there was no trace in its debris of "pay dirt," as the western miner puts it. While the dynamite expert was on the spot, we induced him to shatter the anvil as well as the block of cement, and then the workman, doubtless thinking the new earl was as insane as the old one had been, shouldered his tools, and went back to his mine.

The earl reverted to his former opinion that the gold was concealed in the park, while I held even more firmly to my own belief that the fortune rested in the library.

"It is obvious," I said to him, "that if the treasure is buried outside, someone must have dug the hole. A man so timorous and so reticent as your uncle would allow no one to do this but himself. Higgins maintained the other evening that all picks and spades were safely locked up by himself each night in the toolhouse. The mansion itself was barricaded with such exceeding care that it would have been difficult for your uncle to get outside even if he wished to do so. Then such a man as your uncle is described to have been would continually desire ocular demonstration that his savings were intact, which would be practically impossible if the gold had found a grave in the park. I propose now that we abandon violence and dynamite, and proceed to an intellectual search of the library."

"Very well," replied the young earl, "but as I have already searched the library very thoroughly, your use of the word 'intellectual,' Monsieur Valmont, is not in accord with your customary politeness. However, I am with you. 'Tis for you to command, and me to obey."

"Pardon me, my lord!" I said, "I used the word 'intellectual' in contradistinction to the word 'dynamite.' It had no reference to your former search. I merely propose that we now abandon the use of chemical reaction, and employ the much greater force of mental activity. Did you notice any writing on the margins of the newspapers you examined?"

"No, I did not."

"Is it possible that there may have been some communication on the white border of a newspaper?"

"It is, of course, possible."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Then will you set yourself to the task of glancing over the margin of every newspaper, piling them away in another room when your scrutiny of each is complete? Do not destroy anything, but we must clear out the library completely. I am interested in the accounts, and will examine them."

It was exasperatingly tedious work, but after several days my assistant reported every margin scanned without result, while I had collected each bill and memorandum, classifying them according to date. I could not get rid of a suspicion that the contrary old beast had written instructions for the finding of the treasure on the back of some account, or on the flyleaf of a book, and as I looked at the thousands of volumes still left in the library, the prospect of such a patient and minute search appalled me. But I remembered Edison's words to the effect that if a thing exists, search, exhaustive enough, will find it. From the mass of accounts I selected several; the rest I placed in another room, alongside the heap of the earl's newspapers.

"Now," said I to my helper, "if it please you, we will have Higgins in, as I wish some explanation of these accounts."

"Perhaps I can assist you," suggested his lordship, drawing up a chair opposite the table on which I had spread the statements. "I have lived here for six months, and know as much about things as Higgins does. He is so difficult to stop when once he begins to talk. What is the first account you wish further to light upon?"

"To go back thirteen years I find that your uncle bought a secondhand safe in Sheffield. Here is the bill. I consider it necessary to find that safe."

"Pray forgive me, Monsieur Valmont," cried the young man, springing to his feet and laughing; "so heavy an article as a safe should not slip readily from a man's memory, but it did from mine. The safe is empty, and I gave no more thought to it."

Saying this the earl went to one of the bookcases that stood against the wall, pulled it round as if it were a door, books and all, and displayed the front of an iron safe, the door of which he also drew open, exhibiting the usual empty interior of such a receptacle.

"I came on this," he said, "when I took down all these volumes. It appears that there was once a secret door leading from the library into an outside room, which has long since disappeared; the walls are very thick. My uncle doubtless caused this door to be taken off its hinges, and the safe placed in the aperture, the rest of which he then bricked up."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Quite so," said I, endeavoring to conceal my disappointment. "As this strongbox was bought secondhand and not made to order, I suppose there can be no secret crannies in it?"

"It looks like a common or garden safe," reported my assistant, "but we'll have it out if you say so."

"Not just now," I replied; "we've had enough of dynamiting to make us feel like housebreakers already."

"I agree with you. What's the next item on the program?"

"Your uncle's mania for buying things at secondhand was broken in three instances so far as I have been able to learn from a scrutiny of these accounts. About four years ago he purchased a new book from Denny and Co., the well known booksellers of the Strand. Denny and Co. deal only in new books. Is there any comparatively new volume in the library?"

"Not one."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Oh, quite; I searched all the literature in the house. What is the name of the volume he bought?"

"That I cannot decipher. The initial letter looks like 'M,' but the rest is a mere wavy line. I see, however, that it cost twelve and sixpence, while the cost of carriage by parcel post was sixpence, which shows it weighed something under four pounds. This, with the price of the book, induces me to think that it was a scientific work, printed on heavy paper and illustrated."

"I know nothing of it," said the earl.

"The third account is for wallpaper; twenty-seven rolls of an expensive wallpaper, and twenty-seven rolls of a cheap paper, the latter being just half the price of the former. This wallpaper seems to have been supplied by a tradesman in the station road in the village of Chizelrigg."

"There's your wallpaper," cried the youth, waving his hand; "he was going to paper the whole house, Higgins told me, but got tired after he had finished the library, which took him nearly a year to accomplish, for he worked at it very intermittently, mixing the paste in the boudoir, a pailful at a time as he needed it. It was a scandalous thing to do, for underneath the paper is the most exquisite oak panelling, very plain, but very rich in color."

I rose and examined the paper on the wall. It was dark brown, and answered the description of the expensive paper on the bill.

"What became of the cheap paper?" I asked.

"I don't know."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"I think," said I, "we are on the track of the mystery. I believe that paper covers a sliding panel or concealed door."

"It is very likely," replied the earl. "I intended to have the paper off, but I had no money to pay a workman, and I am not so industrious as was my uncle. What is your remaining account?"

"The last also pertains to paper, but comes from a firm in Budge Row, London, E.C. He has had, it seems, a thousand sheets of it, and it appears to have been frightfully expensive. This bill is also illegible, but I take it a thousand sheets were supplied, although of course it may have been a thousand quires, which would be a little more reasonable for the price charged, or a thousand reams, which would be exceedingly cheap."

"I don't know anything about that. Let's turn on Higgins."

Higgins knew nothing of this last order of paper, either. The wallpaper mystery he at once cleared up. Apparently the old earl had discovered by experiment that the heavy, expensive wallpaper would not stick to the glossy panelling, so he had purchased a cheaper paper, and had pasted that on first. Higgins said he had gone all over the panelling with a yellowish-white paper, and after that was dry, he pasted over it the more expensive rolls.

"But," I objected, "the two papers were bought and delivered at the same time; therefore, he could not have found by experiment that the heavy paper would not stick."

"I don't think there is much in that," commented the earl; "the heavy paper may have been bought first, and found to be unsuitable, and then the coarse, cheap paper bought afterwards. The bill merely shows that the account was sent in on that date. Indeed, as the village of Chizelrigg is but a few miles away, it would have been quite possible for my uncle to have bought the heavy paper in the morning, tried it, and in the afternoon sent for the commoner lot; but in any case, the bill would not have been presented until months after the order, and the two purchases were thus lumped together."

I was forced to confess that this seemed reasonable.

Now, about the book ordered from Denny's. Did Higgins remember anything regarding it? It came four years ago.

Ah, yes, Higgins did; he remembered it very well indeed. He had come in one morning with the earl's tea, and the old man was sitting up in bed reading this volume with such interest that he was unaware of Higgins' knock, and Higgins himself, being a little hard of hearing, took for granted the command to enter. The earl

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hastily thrust the book under the pillow, alongside the revolvers, and rated Higgins in a most cruel way for entering the room before getting permission to do so. He had never seen the earl so angry before, and he laid it all to this book. It was after the book had come that the forge had been erected and the anvil bought. Higgins never saw the book again, but one morning, six months before the earl died, Higgins, in raking out the cinders of the forge, found what he supposed was a portion of the book's cover. He believed his master had burnt the volume.

Having dismissed Higgins, I said to the earl:

"The first thing to be done is to enclose this bill to Denny and Co., booksellers, Strand. Tell them you have lost the volume, and ask them to send another. There is likely someone in the shop who can decipher the illegible writing. I am certain the book will give us a clue. Now, I shall write to Braun and Sons, Budge Row. This is evidently a French company; in fact, the name as connected with paper-making runs in my mind, although I cannot at this moment place it. I shall ask them the use of this paper that they furnished to the late earl."

This was done accordingly, and now, as we thought, until the answers came, we were two men out of work. Yet the next morning, I am pleased to say, and I have always rather plumed myself on the fact, I solved the mystery before replies were received from London. Of course, both the book and the answer of the paper agents, by putting two and two together, would have given us the key.

After breakfast, I strolled somewhat aimlessly into the library, whose floor was now strewn merely with brown wrapping paper, bits of string and all that. As I shuffled among this with my feet, as if tossing aside dead autumn leaves in a forest path, my attention was suddenly drawn to several squares of paper, unwrinkled, and never used for wrapping. These sheets seemed to me strangely familiar. I picked one of them up, and at once the significance of the name Braun and Sons occurred to me. They are paper makers in France, who produce a smooth, very tough sheet, which, dear as it is, proves infinitely cheap compared with the fine vellum it deposed in a certain branch of industry. In Paris, years before, these sheets had given me the knowledge of how a gang of thieves disposed of their gold without melting it. The paper was used instead of vellum in the rougher processes of manufacturing gold leaf. It stood the constant beating of the hammer nearly as well

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

as the vellum, and here at once there flashed on me the secret of the old man's midnight anvil work. He was transforming his sovereigns into gold leaf, which must have been of a rude, thick kind, because to produce the gold leaf of commerce he still needed the vellum as well as a "crutch" and other machinery, of which we had found no trace.

"My lord," I called to my assistant; he was at the other end of the room; "I wish to test a theory on the anvil of your own fresh common sense."

"Hammer away," replied the earl, approaching me with his usual good-natured, jocular expression.

"I eliminate the safe from our investigations because it was purchased thirteen years ago, but the buying of the book, of wall covering, of this tough paper from France, all group themselves into a set of incidents occurring within the same month as the purchase of the anvil and the building of the forge; therefore, I think they are related to one another. Here are some sheets of paper he got from Budge Row. Have you ever seen anything like it? Try to tear this sample."

"It's reasonably tough," admitted his lordship, fruitlessly endeavoring to grip it apart.

"Yes. It was made in France, and is used in gold beating. Your uncle beat his sovereigns into gold leaf. You will find that the book from Denny's is a volume on gold beating, and now as I remember that scribbled word which I could not make out, I think the title of the volume is *Metallurgy*. It contains, no doubt, a chapter on the manufacture of gold leaf."

"I believe you," said the earl; "but I don't see that the discovery sets us any further forward. We're now looking for gold leaf instead of sovereigns."

"Let's examine this wallpaper," said I.

I placed my knife under a corner of it at the floor, and quite easily ripped off a large section. As Higgins had said, the brown paper was on top, and the coarse, light-colored paper underneath. But even that came away from the oak panelling as easily as though it hung there from habit, and not because of paste.

"Feel the weight of that," I cried, handing him the sheet I had torn from the wall.

"By jove!" said the earl, in a voice almost of awe.

I took it from him, and laid it, face downwards, on the wooden table, threw a little water on the back, and with a knife scraped

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

away the porous white paper. Instantly there gleamed up at us the baleful yellow of the gold. I shrugged my shoulders and spread out my hands. The Earl of Chizelrigg laughed aloud and very heartily.

"You see how it is," I cried. "The old man first covered the entire wall with this whitish paper. He heated his sovereigns at the forge and beat them out on the anvil, then completed the process rudely between the sheets of this paper from France. Probably he pasted the gold to the wall as soon as he shut himself in for the night, and covered it over with the more expensive paper before Higgins entered in the morning."

We found afterwards, however, that he had actually fastened the thick sheets of gold to the wall with carpet tacks.

His lordship netted a trifle over a hundred and twenty-three thousand pounds through my discovery, and I am pleased to pay tribute to the young man's generosity by saying that his voluntary settlement made my bank account swell stout as a City alderman.

SOLUTION TO THE AUGUST "UNSOLVED":

Adam ate the apple.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKED & PRINTED

by Mary Cannon



Photocrafts, W. Haddock.

ELLIS PETERS

Murder is very democratic. It knows no bounds of time or place; it excludes no generation, no race, no creed, no color. Its motives are timeless: greed, lust, vanity, fear, shame, revenge. So it should come as no surprise that an imaginative writer might create a resourceful private eye who lives in medieval England and who, like his counterparts in later eras, tracks down murderers in the name of justice.

Yet Ellis Peters' Brother Cadfael mysteries *are* a pleasant surprise. Their setting is the Shrewsbury Abbey of St. Peter and St. Paul, a Benedictine institution set in a western county of England very near the Welsh border. Frontispiece maps in the novels help the reader imagine the abbey and its environs: the three high walls that enclose the church, the refectory and infirmary, the kitchen and storehouses, the stables and courtyards, the monks' cells and guest rooms, and the fragrant, peaceful herbarium which is "Cadfael's kingdom." A fast, narrow river borders the fourth side. Nearby is the town, its cobbled streets and half-timbered shops and homes nestled in the shadow of the high, fortress-like castle. Down the road from the abbey's main gate is St. Giles, a hospital and shelter for lepers, also owned and run by the monks.

The reader of all seven Brother

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Cadfael adventures comes to know the whole area well. A fugitive daringly conceals himself among the afflicted in *The Leper of St. Giles;* another makes a bold escape from the abbey by rafting down the swift river. The castle is stormed and defeated in a bloody battle in *One Corpse Too Many,* and the civil strife caused by royal cousins (King Stephen and Empress Maude of Normandy) in their struggle for the English crown is a motif in several books. Church and state politics is also a recurring theme, especially in *A Morbid Taste for Bones,* when Brother Cadfael accompanies the prior to a small Welsh village very near his own birthplace to help secure the remains of an obscure Welsh virgin-martyr for the abbey's own reliquary; while the relationship between town and abbey is explored in *St. Peter's Fair* when a murderer stalks the abbey's grand, three-day annual "county fair."

Peters (a pseudonym for Edith Pargeter, a prolific English novelist) has generously laced her mysteries with authentic historical detail, with danger and suspense, and with budding romance between young lovers.

Beneath all those goodies, however, are solid murder mysteries, replete with fairly-given clues, intriguing red herrings, and ingenious solutions. Not the least of the novels' treats is Cadfael himself, a fifty-seven-year-old ex-soldier, "squat, barrelchested, bandy-legged," and at peace with his late-in-life vocation. Cadfael has seen much and done much, and his worldly experiences have left him with a keen sense of humor, boundless courage and energy, and a broad degree of tolerance and patience. As the abbey's herbalist, he also functions as the coroner. In *Monk's Hood,* he alone recognizes that the husband of his boyhood fiancée has been poisoned by one of Cadfael's own liniments, one that is deadly when consumed. In *Virgin in the Ice,* Cadfael seeks three young political refugees and discovers a band of ruthless renegades; when he allies himself with a mysterious young knight, he also realizes that he has met the son whose existence he had never imagined, the child of a long-ago liaison when Cadfael was a young Crusader.

Escape to twelfth century England and let Brother Cadfael be your guide. It may prove more fun than the summer vacation you are still paying for in September.

(All of the Brother Cadfael chronicles were published in hardcover by William Morrow.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MYSTERY REVIEWS

A first novel by Sharyn McCrumb offers up some zany characters, clever dialogue, and an ingratiating heroine in the person of Elizabeth MacPherson, a recent graduate now at loose ends. (She has pushed her boyfriend into a fountain, and she jumps from one vocational scheme to the next. I have a strong suspicion she'll end up a private investigator . . . ?) **Sick of Shadows** is dotted with Elizabeth's letters to her brother, complaining about her lot: she's a houseguest of her "crazy relatives," a prelude to her being a bridesmaid to her dotty cousin in the upcoming wedding. But when the cousin is murdered—and the painting she was working on disappears—Elizabeth begins to show her real talents as a sleuth. Don't look for stark realism here, or for staunch credibility in the plot. But *Sick of Shadows* is lively, sometimes almost hilarious, and generally lots of fun. (Avon Books, 128 pp., $2.95)

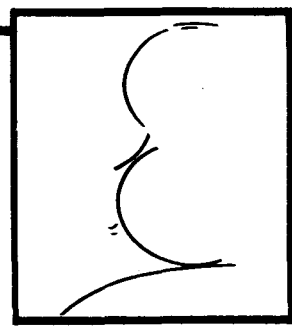
Strip Search by Rex Burns is the sixth "Gabe Wager" mystery to date, and it's worthy of its predecessors. Wager is a half-Anglo, half-Mexican detective on the Denver police force. Here he must prowl the "strip," the site of porno moviehouses and topless bars—definitely not a part of town featured in tourist brochures of the "Mile High City" but familiar, all the same, to urban dwellers everywhere. The case is baffling: two exotic dancers, apparently with no connection, are murdered. Wager plunges on with the investigation even when the case is officially shelved. When an informant is killed, he knows he's close to the murderer. The question is: how close is the killer to wiping out Wager? (The Viking Press, $13.95, 255 pp.)

Deadlock is Sara Paretsky's second novel to feature Chicago's female specialist in corporate crime, young V.I. Warshawsky. When V.I.'s friend and cousin, ex-hockey star "Boom-Boom," dies by falling off a busy waterfront pier, V.I. contests the conclusion that it was an accident. Thus begins her investigation of the huge Great Lakes shipping industry. Realistic, tough-minded and very likable, V.I. is just one of a cast of characters, drawn with honesty, full of pain and humor, who act out a fast-paced drama against a well-researched background. I look forward to many more V.I. Warshawsky adventures. (Dial Press, $14.95, 252 pp.)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MURDER BY DIRECTION

by Peter Shaw



Danny Boy is a revenge movie with atmosphere. Written and produced in Ireland and using Irish actors (many of them from the famed Abbey Theatre), it has a local authenticity reminiscent of the New Zealand feature, *Beyond Reasonable Doubt,* reviewed here in March. "Danny" is the saxophone player for a small, touring dance band that specializes in working class entertainments. Late one night, after everyone has left the Dreamland Ballroom, a crudely constructed casino out on a rural road, Danny's manager is gunned down by three thugs. Danny secretly witnesses the crime, noting that one of the killers wears a built-up orthopedic shoe. After his two confederates have blown up the casino, the man with the shoe uses his submachine gun to kill the second witness to the crime—a strange, mute girl who unaccountably steps out of hiding.

When the police question Danny, he reveals nothing. But he is able to use information gleaned from them to stalk and kill the murderers one by one. He employs a certain amount of detective work, starting with a medical supply store that displays orthopedic shoes in the window.

But the mystery aspect of the movie is not much more important than in *Hamlet,* a play that comes to mind because it is another tale of a sensitive young man tracking a murderer. Also as in *Hamlet,* Danny grows confused about his motives for revenge and seems to go insane for a time. Furthermore, there is something rotten in the state of Denmark (read "Ireland"), as the police inspector points out. (The inspector is called "Bloom" in obvious but unexplained refer-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Copyright © 1982 Columbia Pictures.



Honor Heffernan and Stephen Rea in *Danny Boy*, a Triumph Films Release.

ence to James Joyce's *Ulysses.)* While going through mug shots Danny says, "They can't all have done something," to which Bloom replies, "Nowadays, here, everyone's guilty."

Like one of those mystery novels in which the details and the setting seem to take over from the mystery, *Danny Boy* gets to be more about Ireland than anything else. The Irish National Tourist Board never let on about the deprivation that lies hidden away from sight on the Emerald Isle: cramped rooms and low ceilings in homes; primitive kitchens with old fashioned oilcloth on the work surfaces; unfashionable clothing; a plodding, resigned look on the faces of those who come to dance to Danny's saxophone music. The cheap, crude glitter of the dance halls hardly compensates for the lack of brightness that seems to be general all over Ireland.

The Irish theme is picked up in the plot as well. For though the thugs turn out to be extortionists, their submachine gun calls to mind the political assassinations going on in Northern Ireland. Like the politically driven men of that troubled land, Danny sets out to take logical revenge, gets drunk on the act, and ends up killing more people than he set out to stalk. Along the way he destroys his relationship with his girlfriend and drives another woman to suicide. He thinks he is acting for himself while deceiving the police, but the truth is that they are manipulating him to uncover the mastermind of the extortion ring. The avenger as victim, the blown-up dance hall, the ruined lives of women—all of these seem to be comments on Ireland's troubles. If such themes stretch the mystery genre a bit far, at least the result has been to bring a genuine Irish movie to the screen.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CLASSIFIED MARKET

AH SEPT/84

ALFRED HITCHCOCK — published 13 times a year. CLASSIFIED AD rate is $2.35 per word — payable in advance—($47.00 minimum). Capitalized words 40¢ per word additional.

ADDITIONAL INCOME

ASSEMBLE OUR DEVICES (Electronic) We send parts and pay for assembly. Beginners welcome. Write: Electronic Development Lab, Box 1560D, Pinellas Park, Florida 33565.

NO Promises just facts. Moneymaking ideas. $2.00 for motivation booklet with ideas included. SMD-I, 2249-2 Wheeless Rd., Augusta, GA 30904.

AUTHOR'S SERVICE

Looking for a publisher? Learn how you can have your book published, promoted, distributed. Send for free booklet. HP-5, Vantage Press, 516 W. 34th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10001.

AVIATION

ANTIGRAVITY PROPULSION DEVICE! Free Brochure, RDA, Box 873, Concord, NC 28025.

BLUEPRINTS, PATTERNS & PLANS

BEAUTIFUL Jewelry Box. Complete, easy to follow plans. Great gift for loved one. $2.00 to: Ricky Holden, 677 Mulberry, Atwater, CA 95301.

BOOKS & PERIODICALS

FREE List of hardcover mysteries. Bimonthly catalogues list 8,000 titles each year. Dunn's Mysteries, 251 Baldwin Ave., Meriden, CT 06450.

FREE CATALOGUES, hardbacks, paperbacks. Search Service. Detective Mystery Booksearch, Box 15460, Orlando, FL 32808.

FREE CATALOG. Used hardback mystery, crime and detective books. Steve Powell, Dept. DP, The Hideaway, Bar Harbor, Maine 04609.

LUIS Mendoza, Vic Varallo, Ivor Maddox, Jesse Falkenstein in $12 quarterly newsletter. First class mail. Rinehart Potts, 1223 Glen Terrace, Glassboro, New Jersey 08028.

BOOKS & PERIODICALS—Cont'd

THE ARMCHAIR DETECTIVE is an Edgar-winning quarterly devoted to an appreciation of MYSTERY fiction. Contains articles, interviews, reviews. Subscription: $20 per year. Sample $5.00. The Armchair Detective, 129 West 56th, Suite 3R, New York, N.Y. 10019. (212)-765-0902.

PUBLISH YOUR BOOK! Join our successful authors. Publicity, advertising, beautiful books. All subjects invited. Send for fact-filled booklet and free manuscript report. Carlton Press, Dept. SMI, 11 West 32 Street, New York 10001.

PULPS (Shadow, Doc Savage, SF), Paperbacks, Hardcover Books, (MU, Swift, Movie), Dark Shadows, TV Guides, TV Avengers, James Bond, Comic Books, Magazines, Movie Items, etc. 1900-1984. Catalogs $1.00: Rogofsky, Box 107-D, Glen Oaks, New York 11004.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

$1,000 Weekly Home Business Directory. Free Details. Name and address to: Box 1610-IO, Darien, Connecticut, 06820-1610.

SEVERAL HIGHLY PROFITABLE Home Businesses requiring NO Equipment, Experience, Inventory or Investment. FREE Details: Opportunity Publications, 4887 Trail, Salt Lake City, Utah 84120.

STAY HOME! MAKE MONEY ADDRESSING ENVELOPES. VALUABLE GENUINE OFFER. 20¢. Write Lindco, 3636-DA Peterson Ave., Chicago, IL 60659.

MONEY MAKERS: CUSTOM KITS FOR SMALL SIGNS, Key Chains, Bumperstickers, and $29.95 Special Auto Tag Kit. Manufacturer Direct. For Free Catalog. Creative Plastics, 1-813-885-4257, P.O. Box 260365, Tampa, Florida 33685.

MAKE YOUR CLASSIFIED AD PAY. Get "How to Write A Classified Ad That Pulls." Includes certificate worth $2.00 towards a classified ad. Send $2.25 (includes postage) to I.M. Bozoki, Davis Publications, Inc., 380 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PLACE CLASSIFIED

To be included in the next issue please send order and remittance to I. M. Bozoki, Classified Ad Manager, DAVIS PUBLICATIONS, INC., 380 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES—Cont'd

AGENTS WANTED NOW! OBTAIN FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE. AMAZING NO NONSENSE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY. SEND $1.00: DYNASTY, POB 2386-B, St. Louis, MO 63136.

$360 Weekly/Up Mailing Circulars! No bosses/quotas! Sincerely interested rush reply envelope: Division Headquarters, Box 464CFU, Woodstock, IL 60098.

BUY IT WHOLESALE

400,000 BARGAINS Below Wholesale! Many Free! Liquidations...Closeouts...Job Lots...Single Samples. Free Details. Worldwide Bargainhunters, Box 730-IO, Holland, MI 49423.

CAMERAS & PHOTO SUPPLIES

NOW AVAILABLE TO YOU FOR ONLY $19.95, 35mm Camera. Use 35mm films. Fixed focus Time delayed adapter, self timer hot shoe for flash, carrying case. Allow 4 to 6 weeks delivery. $19.95 to: Dawson Enterprise & Gifts, P.O. Box 6148, Newark, New Jersey 07106.

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

LITTLE Known Government Code Helps Me EARN $70.00 PER NIGHT WHILE SLEEPING. No Experience. No Investment. No Selling. No Bull. Free Info., Right-On Technical, P.O. Box 30471, Santa Barbara, California 93130.

GOVERNMENT SURPLUS

"GOVERNMENT SURPLUS" JEEPS $30.00! 5,000,000 Items! Complete information Your area. 1984 OFFICIAL DIRECTORY. $3.00 (Guaranteed). SURPLUS, (A736), 4620 Wisconsin Northwest, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20016.

HEALTH & BEAUTY

BRAIN FOOD! Powerful algae extract helps revitalize physical and mental alertness. Free brochure. NNC Labs, Box 74-DV, Merrick, N.Y. 11566.

HELP WANTED

HELP! MAILERS WANTED. $250.00 for every 500 mailed weekly. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY! Do it in your own home. All you do is stuff envelopes and mail them. Stamp & Envelopes WILL BE SUPPLIED!! For details and application RUSH $1 to: EXTRA INCOME ENTERPRISES. Box 75307, Washington, D.C. 20013.

HYPNOTISM

FREE Catalog. Hypnotism, Hypnotic cassettes, sleep learning. Become the person you truly want to be. DLMH, Box 487, Anaheim, CA 92805.

INVENTIONS WANTED

EARN Royalties from your invention or new product idea. Nuprodux International, 1377 K St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.

JEWELRY

CLOSEOUT JEWELRY. 55¢ Dozen. 25¢ gets catalog. ROUSSELS, 107-310 Dow, Arlington, MA 02174-7199.

LOANS BY MAIL

$LOANS$ ON SIGNATURE TO—$100,000! Any purpose. Details Free. ELITE, Box 206-DG, East Rockaway, New York 11518.

BORROW $25,000 "OVERNIGHT." Any purpose. Keep indefinitely! Free Report reveals little-known sources/techniques! Success Research, Box 19739-SW, Indianapolis, IN 46219.

MAILING LISTS

MAILING LISTS. 39 categories. Free information, E Lobeck, 251 Sunset Avenue, Englewood, N.J. 07631.

MEMORY IMPROVEMENT

INSTANT MEMORY...NEW WAY TO REMEMBER. No memorization. Release your PHOTOGRAPHIC memory. Stop forgetting! FREE information. Institute of Advanced Thinking, 845DP, ViaLapaz, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Classified Continued

MISCELLANEOUS

OLDTIME radio programs. Suspense, drama, science fiction, comedies. Highly enjoyable tapes. Free catalogue. Carl D. Froelich, Route One, New Freedom, Pennsylvania 17349.

MONEYMAKING OPPORTUNITIES

GOOD MONEY! Weekly! Processing Mail! Free Supplies, Postage! No Selling! No Running Ads! Information? Rush stamped envelope! Foodmaster-SCM, Burnt Hills, NY 12027.

NEED HELP? Get $$MONEY$$, Success, Happiness, Free Car and much more! Write Today: AMERICAN HELP, 3909 South Boulevard, Suite 208DM, Charlotte, NC 28209.

CAN You stuff 1000 envelopes for $500.00 weekly? Send six 20¢ stamps. Blume, Post Office Box 460159, Garland Texas 75046-0159.

THOUSANDS of dollars possible in Mail-order. For details, write: John Clark, P.O. Box 16375, Houston, Texas 77022. Satisfaction guaranteed.

$$$ LOOK AT THIS!! You can now get 100,000. YES, One hundred thousand to $500,000 "CASH" in as little as 50 to 60 days, with "E.I.E.'s" NEW Multi-level Marketing program. We didn't believe it either, see for yourself!! For full details RUSH 25¢ to: E.M. O'CONNOR, Box 26116, Washington, D.C. 20001.

$60.00 per Hundred securing-stuffing envelopes from home. Offer-details: Rush stamped self-addressed envelope. Imperial, P-460, X17410, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33318.

"HUNDRED$ WEEKLY"! PROCESSING MAIL! $PECTACULAR HOME PROFITS! $TART IMMEDIATELY! INTERESTED? WRITE!: MJG-DPG, AMBLER, PA 19002.

OF INTEREST TO ALL

NEED HELP? Visa, Mastercard, Loans! No credit check! Guaranteed! AMERICAN CREDIT HELP, 3909 South Boulevard, Suite 208DH, Charlotte, NC 28209.

OF INTEREST TO ALL—Cont'd

MONEY...JOBS...DEGREES! Newest opportunities. Higher income. Career advancement. Home businesses. FREE BOOK CATALOG. Eden Press, Box 8410-A, Fountain Valley, CA 92728.

NEWLY published 144-page book, "How You Can Earn $100,000 A Year Without Working (Legally, Honestly, Tax-Free!" written by a semi-invalid to help other ill or disabled. It works! Order yours now, $16.95 or send for free brochure. Jadestone Publishing Corp., 3341 W. Peoria, Suite 230-AD, Phoenix, AZ 85029.

PERSONAL

SINGLE? Widowed? Divorced? Nationwide introduction! Hundreds of sincere members! All Ages! Free information! Write: Identity, Box 315-DT, Royal Oak, Michigan 48068.

SINGLE? Meet that special person—anywhere! Very low fees. DATELINE, 316 Fifth Ave., New York 10001. (202) 328-1300 or (513) 821-4600 or (612) 888-1240.

READ "How to Write A Classified Ad That Pulls." Instructive booklet tells how. Also includes certificate worth $2.00 toward a classified ad in any of our publications. For your copy send $2.25 (includes postage) to I.M. Bozoki, Davis Publications, Inc., 380 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

SOPHISTICATED Scandinavians, all ages, seek enlightened correspondence, sincere friendships. Details: (please enclose stamp) Scannaclub-CO3, Box 4, Pittsford, NY 14534.

ORIENTAL Ladies. Faithful, traditional, affectionate. Thousands seeking marriage, now! Cherry Blossoms, Box 1021DA, Honokaa, Hawaii 96727.

BEAUTIFUL GIRLS SEEK FRIENDSHIP AND MARRIAGE. American—Mexican—Philippine—European. Photo selection FREE! Latins, Box 1716-DD, Chula Vista, CA 92012.

AMAZING Adult Mail Order! Earns $1000 weekly! We did it! Free details: Jill Kane, Contemporary Mail-Order, Box 1600-AF, Venice, FL 34284-1600.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Classified Continued

PERSONAL—Cont'd

HOW TO STOP SMOKING Booklet explains How it works. Send $2.98 to: Ruthie's Mailorder Manuals, 36 Highview Rd., Ridgefield, CT 06877. Free Booket with order. "There's A Gold Mine in Classified Ads."

RADIO & TELEVISION

CABLE TV DESCRAMBLERS and CONVERTERS. PLANS and PARTS. Build or Buy. For information send $2.00. C&D Electronics, P.O. Box 21, Jenison, MI 49428.

CABLE TV Descramblers, converters. Build, buy, catalog $2.00: J.D.T. Electronics, Inc., P.O. Box 8274, Dept. B., Grand Rapids, MI 49508.

CABLE TV descrambler plans. Complete and easily followed $2.98. Stevens Publishing Co., Dept. ALH, Box 20286, Bowling Green, KY 42102-6286.

RECORDS, TAPE & SOUND EQUIPMENT

FREE Promotional albums, concert tickets, stereos, etc. Information: Barry Publications, 477 82nd Street, Brooklyn, New York 11209.

SONGWRITERS

POEMS WANTED. Songs recorded and published. Radio-TV promotions. Broadway Music Productions, Box 7438-DA, Sarasota, FL 33578.

SONGWRITERS: Exciting offer! Poems, songs needed. Free evaluation. Creative Music Productions, Box 1943-A9, Houston, TX 77251-1943.

TAPES & CASSETTES

CBS MYSTERY THEATRES—Over 700 shows on reels or cassettes. Best quality, fastest service. Catalog $1.00: P.O. Box 3509, Lakeland, FL 33802.

TOYS, GAMES & ENTERTAINMENT

ATTENTION: Gumshoes, Flatfoots, Shamuses, Eyes, Coppers and Dicks. MURDER INK., wants you for a little game of murder. Everyone plays a suspect and a detective. With this challenging, new dual-role party game from MURDER INK., your parties come to life (and death) as dilattante detectives search for clues. If you don't solve it, someone else will. If you don't buy it, you'll wish you had. SATISFACTION GUARANTEED or your money back. Natch, Flatfoot. Send $14.95, check or money order to: MURDER INK., P.O. Box 274, Morton Grove, IL 60053 or call 1-800-SHAMUS7—for more information.

TRAVEL

GASLIGHT MYSTERY THEATRE presents MURDER AT THE INN and GHOST STORIES mystery vacations. Free brochures: Box 832, Phoenixville, PA 19460

TREASURE FINDERS

NEW WHITE'S METAL DETECTORS. Write for Free Catalog. Phone (904) 767-7275. D&F Enterprises, 3280-C South Atlantic Ave., Daytona Beach Shores, FL 32018

UNUSUAL BOOKS

THE INTELLIGENCE LIBRARY: Many unique books & official manuals on RESTRICTED subjects—Bugging, Wiretapping, Locksmithing, Covert Investigation, & MUCH MORE. Free brochures, MENTOR, DP, 135-53 No. Blvd., Flushing, N.Y. 11354.

PLACE YOUR AD IN ONE OF OUR FICTION COMBINATIONS:
Mystery, Sci-Fi, or Special

OR TRY ONE OF OUR OTHER COMBINATIONS:
Combo #1, Combo #2, or Combo #3.

Each combination offers you a Special Discount Rate.
For further information write to I. M. Bozoki, Classified Ad Manager, Davis Publications, Inc., 380 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

GET AWAY WITH MURDER.

GET $118.40 WORTH OF MACDONALD, CHARTERIS, JOHNSTON AND 9 OTHER GREAT WRITERS FOR $1.

As a new member of The Detective Book Club, you'll make your first big killing on our introductory offer: 12 of the best recently-published mysteries for $1.

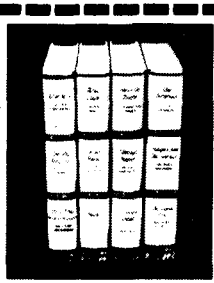
You'll savor baffling murder cases, international intrigue, innocent people caught in a web of evil, terror touched by the supernatural. All served up with the intricate plotting, bizarre twists and gripping action that are the hallmarks of the great modern masters.

Bought in a bookstore, they'd cost $118.40. But as a new member of The Detective Book Club, you get all 12 tales shown on the left for only $1...in four handsome, hardbound, triple-volumes.

As a member, you'll get the Club's free monthly Preview, which describes in advance each month's selections. They're chosen by the Club's editors, who select the best from more than 400 mysteries published each year. You may reject any volume before or after receiving it, within 21 days; there's no minimum number of books you must buy. And you may cancel your membership at any time.

When you accept a club selection, you get three complete, full-length detective novels in one hardcover triple-volume like the ones shown on this page for only $8.95. That's about $2.98 per mystery — at least $5 (and sometimes $6 or $7) less than just one costs in the publishers' original editions.

Recent selections have included new thrillers by top names like those featured here, plus Len Deighton, Dick Francis and many others. Start enjoying the benefits of membership in The Detective Book Club. Send no money now. You'll be billed later for your 12 mysteries. Send the coupon today to: The Detective Book Club, Roslyn, N.Y. 11576.



Please enroll me as a member and send me at once my 4 triple-volumes shown here, containing 12 mysteries. I enclose no money now. I may examine my books for one week, then will either accept all four volumes for the special new member price of only $1 plus shipping, or return them and owe nothing.

As a member, I will receive free the Club's monthly Preview, which describes my next selection. I will always have at least ten days to reject any selection by returning the form provided. I may return any book sent for full credit within 21 days. For each monthly triple-volume I keep, I will send you only $8.95, plus shipping. I understand I may cancel my membership at any time.

4 GZ
D23M5S

THE DETECTIVE BOOK CLUB, ROSLYN, N.Y. 11576.

Mr./Mrs./Ms. _____

Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

PUBLISHED BY
WALTER J. BLACK, INC.
ESTABLISHED 1923

Note: Members accepted in U.S.A. and Canada only; offer slightly different in Canada.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



OUR WOMEN'S MOVEMENT STARTED 125 YEARS AGO

For 13 decades, YWCA women have been moving . . . and changing patterns of action – and inaction – in areas of special need to women and girls. YWCA women address both national and international concerns within their home communities, working in more than 6,000 locations all over the country.

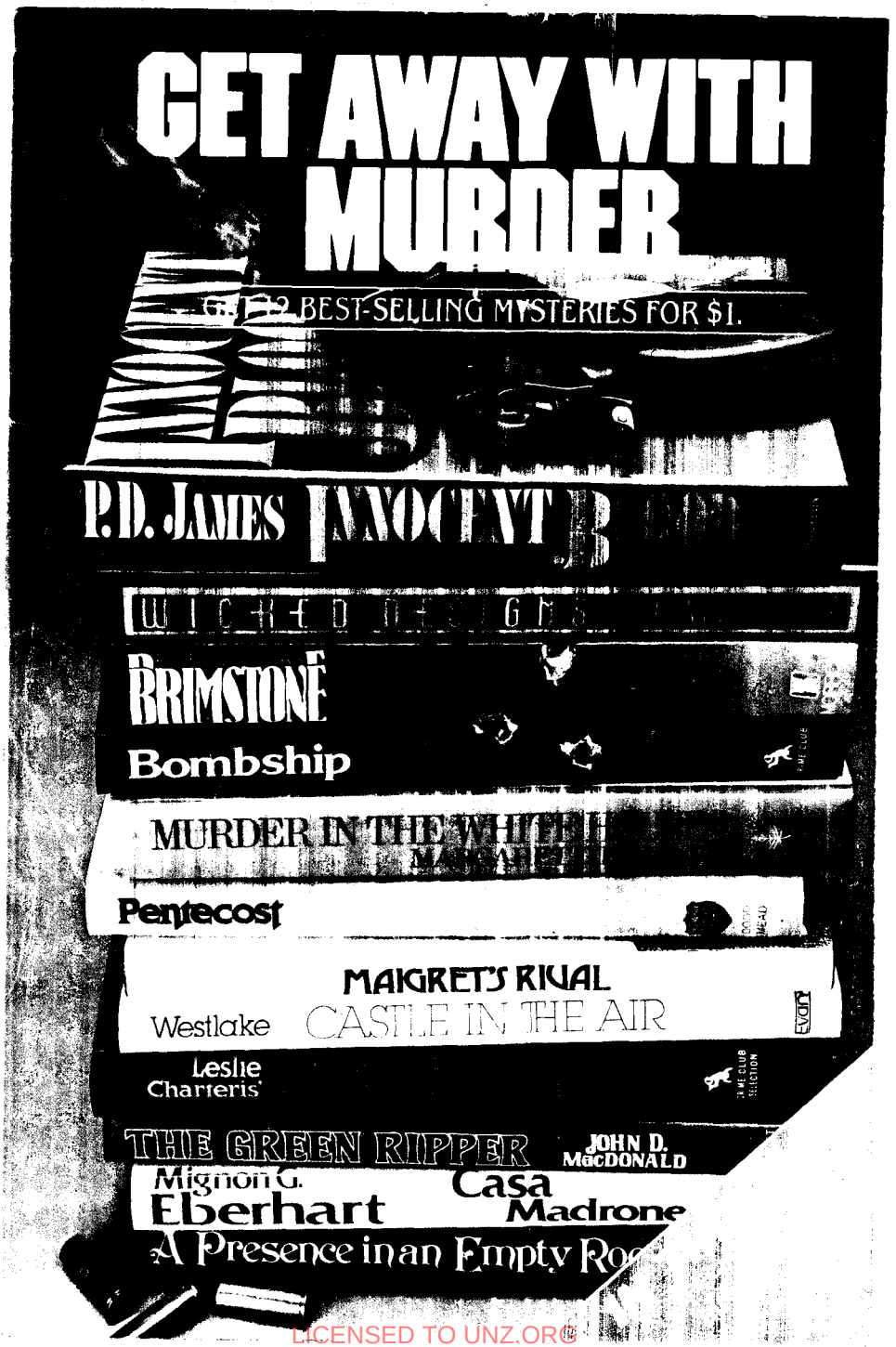
That's the continuity of the YWCA. That's why we've been successful for 125 years. People have turned to us for help, and they've gotten it.

They still do.

YWCA OF THE U.S.A.

For further information,
contact your community YWCA,
or write
Communications, National Board, YWCA
135 West 50th Street, New York, N.Y. 10020

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED